This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

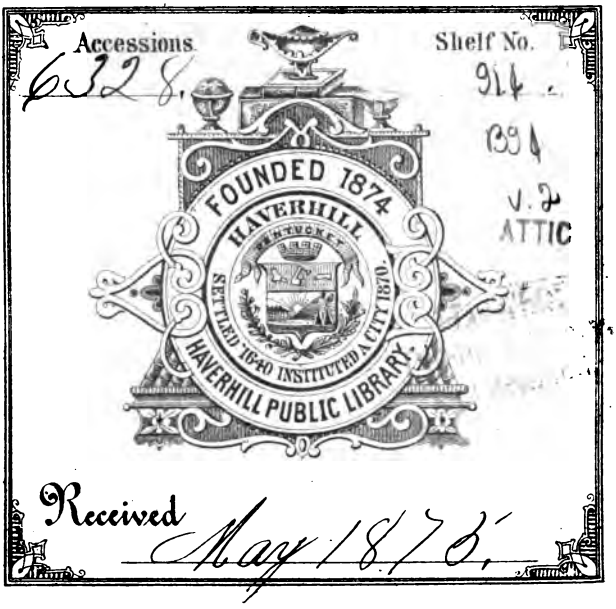
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

KD 52519 (2)


Accessions
6328.
Shelf No.
914.
B91
v. 2
ATTIC
FOUNDED 1874
HAVERHILL
KENTUCKY
SETTLED 1840 INSTITUTED A CITY 1870
HAVERHILL PUBLIC LIBRARY
Received May 1878.

MY FIRST TRAVELS:

INCLUDING RIDES IN THE PYRENEES, SCENES DURING AN INUNDATION AT AVIGNON, SKETCHES IN FRANCE AND SAVOY, VISITS TO CONVENTS AND HOUSES OF CHARITY, &c., &c.

By SELINA BURBURY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

London:
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1859.

KD 52519 (2)

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
MAR 7 1955

52 #13

TO

MISS GOUGH,

FORMERLY OF SWANSEA,

IN MEMORY OF

TIMES OF HAPPINESS AND OF SORROW

EXPERIENCED THERE,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY HER ATTACHED FRIEND,

S. B.

MY FIRST TRAVELS.

CHAPTER I.

THE solitary ride over the Tourmalêt Pass, terrible as it was from rain, mist, and other disagreeable things, did not lack interest; the ever changing aspect of the mountains in storm, darkness and gleams of sunshine, awakes thoughts that repay one for a good deal of suffering. But the ride we had from St. Beat two days afterwards had no such consolatory interest, and proved to be the only altogether dissatisfying one I had in the Pyrenees.

We took a level and uninteresting road; the weather had suddenly changed from heat to sharp cold; a cutting and high wind blew from the mountains, and seemed to come breathing of their snows, while at the same time the sun was bright. It was a thoroughly uncomfortable day, so it is as well to say no more about it. It appeared very long in passing, yet left little matter to retrace in memory or on paper, by one who does not belong to the extensive order of grumbling travellers. We—for now the pompous plural may take the place of the insignificant singular pronoun—we may therefore disappear as all out-of-temper people ought to do, until a warmer breeze and more lovely scenery bring us forth again in a better humour.

At six o'clock, then, on a morning when the sun seemed inclined to atone by its warmth for the inclemency of the rude wind that had for two or three days shewed a malignancy that the season by no means warranted, we re-appear on a mountain road, which is to conduct us from Tarbes to the town and castle of Lourdes, a well-

named town, if a pun by an English interpretation were allowable, for heavy and dull is its aspect.

The heat of the sun, which, in the young hour of prime, had been delightful, was becoming rather too great when we reached Lourdes, and having left the horses to rest and feed, we mounted up to the castle to enjoy the view from its elevated platform. There, leaning over the battlements, we discussed the old history of the fortress, to the great discontent of its expectant guide, who stood ready primed with his own version of it, and not understanding our speech, probably thought we were as indifferent to sights we had travelled far to see, as our tourists are traditionally said to be.

That old king of chroniclers, the pleasant Sir John Froissart, was quite familiarly known to my companions; and leaning on the battlements they talked over the time he tells of, when our Black Prince took a fancy to the castle of Lourdes, and gained it as part of the ransom of the French King John; and repeated the story

he gives of its terrible siege, and the fate of its gallant defender, as it was told to him by the knight of Foix.

We had now come from Tarbes, having rested there one of the cold days during which our ill humour lasted, so that the account of Froissart may be quoted as being probably pleasanter than our own.

"Tarbes," saith Sir John, "is a handsome town, situated in a champagne country, among rich vineyards; there is a town, a city, and a castle, all separated from each other, and enclosed with gates, walls, and towers; the beautiful river Lisse, which divides the town, rises in the mountains of Bearn and Catalonia, and is as clear as rock water."

The vineyards and river, and remains of gates, walls, and towers remain, but how changed is the city of Tarbes since the Black Prince held court there!

"The Prince and Princess of Wales came with their court, which was then very numerous and splendid, into Bigorre, and fixed it at

Tarbes. I learned that the Prince of Wales, during his residence at Tarbes, had a great desire to see the castle of Lourde, three leagues distant among the mountains. When he had fully explored that castle and country, he was much pleased, as well with the strength of the place, as with its situation on the frontiers of several countries, for those of Lourde can overrun the kingdom of Arragon to a great extent, and as far as Barcelona, in Catalonia.

"The Black Prince then called to him a knight of his household, and said:

"'Sir Peter, I nominate and appoint you governor and captain of Lourde, and regent of Bigorre. Now, guard well this castle, so as to give good account of it to my lord and father, and to myself.'

"'My lord,' quoth the knight, 'that will I cheerfully do.'

"And forthwith he did homage and pledged his faith."

But the treacherous Count de Foix, in the chronicler's narrative, sends under the guise of

friendship for Sir Peter, his relative and subject, and when he comes, requires the castle to be delivered to him.

"'My lord,' saith Sir Peter, 'it is true I owe you faith and homage, for I am a poor knight of your blood and country; but as for the castle of Lourde I hold it for the King of England, and to no other will I surrender it.'

"'Ho! ho!' cries the Count de Foix, 'dost thou say so? By this head, thou hast not said it for nothing!'

"So saying he struck at him so foully with his dagger that he wounded him in five places.

"'Ha! ha!' says the good night, 'my lord, this is not gentle treatment; you sent for me hither, and you are murdering me.'

"So, having received these five wounds, the count ordered him to be cast into a dungeon, which was done, and he there died."

It was while we were discussing the delightful chronicles of "things done in France" in the olden time, that we saw the modern guide of the castle of Lourde anxiously shuffling himself into

a jacket, which he had caught up, but had not delayed to put on when he saw English travellers arrive.

He was fully acquainted with all the history of the castle so far as he considered it would interest such tourists. When we asked him if the English had not once had possession of Lourdes, he looked much surprised, and said the Duke of Wellington had tried to take it, but was repulsed, and that the only Englishman who had gained entrance there was Monseigneur Le Duc d'Elgine.

This is a standard piece of information given to all Lord Elgin's countrymen, who thus learn that the noble lord was caught in his passage through France and imprisoned there, and thus by order of Napoleon the castle of Lourdes was in modern days put in possession of an Englishman.

Our road, after Lourdes, lay through a bare mountain of slate, which seemed to have been shivered to afford a passage which it enclosed in a high cold barrier. It reminded one of the

pass of Clanberris, in Wales, and proved an excellent foil to set off the freshness and beauty of the vale to which it led, as a bare, unfurnished vestibule might enhance the luxurious aspect of a tasteful boudoir.

The charming Val d'Argelez, especially when seen beneath the glowing sun of that most delightful day, might give one an idea of what the garden of Eden was possibly like, if two objects, which, nevertheless, contribute to its adornment, were removed. These are the picturesque ruins of two feudal castles, which guarded the opening of the valley in old times of border warfare, and tell of the existence of strife, rapine, and other evils unknown to Eden when sin as yet was not.

The vale is wide, and that verdure peculiar to this southern clime is nowhere more rich and lovely than here. Its Gave, that a little higher up is seen as a foaming torrent, winds through the open basin, blue, bright, and as calm as the human heart which knows the blessed peace the world does not disturb.

The beautifully formed mountains that hem in this fairest of Pyrenean vales were gemmed with snow, that shone and sparkled in the glowing sun, and in the distance the vivid green of the grass and trees seemed to blend in that soft blue haziness of the atmosphere so often seen in this region, giving to the scenery that delicious combination of colouring, to which, as has been said, we often refer for a simile to the paintings of Claude Lorraine.

As the horses had been lately rested, it was not necessary, on their account, to disturb our pleasant feelings by encountering the gloom and dirt of such an inn as the small town of Argelez possesses; and that town, like most other mountain ones, loses the picturesque and pretty air that distance gave it as soon as you get to it, or demand the accommodation it offers. All mountain villages are romantic-looking and pretty at a distance.

We passed straight through Argelez, where wretched victims of cretinism stared at us, and went up a most rugged and steep lane, very

much broken, and disagreeable. This lane conducts to the still more charming Val d'Azun, which, as all pretty things ought to do, shews its disagreeable aspect first. Our Spanish guide knew what he was about, and led us right up the rough ascent till he came to a completely charming grove of immense chestnut trees. It was carpeted with the softest, most fairy-like turf and moss, studded with masses of rock, partly greened over, partly of a dark brown hue, that contrasted delightfully with the green. Here he invited us to repose. We dismounted; the horses were turned loose to feed, and we sat down to do the same. Here was an hotel which will not be found noted among the best in a guide book. But O! luxurious travellers, might ye not have envied us?

The fine leafy chestnuts were our roof, the mossy sod our dais, a flat rock our table; but think not we were without substantial and common-place materials for a repast. No, we had a cold chicken, grapes, bread, roasted chestnuts, wine, to dilute which a fountain yielded

its pure supply: and thus did we make a dinner more worthy of a lasting memory than that "the best hotel" could ever furnish.

The heat of the sun, when with regret we left the umbrageous shelter of the great trees, was excessive; I evaded its burning rays on my forehead by dressing my head á l'Espagnole, as I had seen the young women in Catalonia, and putting a white handkerchief over it, projecting in front, tied my bonnet to the saddle.

Thus we journeyed upwards to the up-lying Val d'Azun, the whole passage to which is singularly beautiful; during a part of it we passed beneath the grateful shade of lofty forest trees, among which were the ash, walnut, and cherry, with stems entirely wreathed in vines, the branches of which shot up even to, and beyond their tops; while others hung a light drapery from one to another, stretching their slight graceful arms, in feminine beauty to the majestic support of their masculine protectors, mingling hues and shade in a most exquisite manner. The leaves of the cherry and lighter ash, the rich walnut, and the broad dark vine

blending like the well chosen shades of a piece of worsted work; while the long graceful arms of the clinging climber, sometimes capriciously disdaining support, waved in freedom over the light mossy turf beneath, casting a varying, fantastic shadow on its almost dazzlingly light verdure.

Beautiful slopes of the same delicious green, of which neither the garden of England nor—as some might think, the mis-named Emerald Isle, offer the least resemblance, received from the fervid sun a sort of radiancy quite different from the yellow, parched up aspect of our soils beneath a dry and burning sky, and descended at one side of our mountain road, quite to the blue clear Gave, whose opposite bank was at least equally lovely.

We proceeded at the slowest pace a horse's feet could move; compassion to ourselves as well as to our ponies regulating our progress. Strange to relate, this heat was followed two nights afterwards by a fall of snow on the mountains.

It would certainly have been pleasanter to

sit under the vines and cherry trees, and tell stories, than to sit on horseback; but we did not exclaim: "How hot it is!" many hundreds of times.

"Arras!" was technically called out by our guide, and the sound was not unwelcome, for a refuge from the sun was desirable. The scenery was fair, the poor inn most foul. It was also a tailor's; men, boys, and women were at work making habiliments of frieze as zealously as if as much money as swelled the fortune of the great tailor of London, were to follow the work of shears and needles. The hostess threw down some one of those articles which are worn in the mountains as well as in the salons, and opened an inner door, with looks not words inviting us to enter. We hesitated, for gloom and dirt were all we could see.

But women's wit—though her tongue was tied—suggested a trap to catch both a sunbeam and ourselves. She opened an opposite door leading out to a rude sort of garden. A softened sunlight entered, softened and cooled by the shade

of trees, and we beheld through that open door a view that not only conquered our reluctance to enter, but caused us to do so precipitately.

That door opened into a wild sort of garden sloping down towards the green, and still sloping banks of the river. At the left, tall trees festooned in airy gracefulness, by equally tall vines, interlacing their long slender arms, shaded, but did not exclude the view; in front was the greenly embedded Gave, whose opposite bank shewed even greater beauty, and at the right rose mountain behind mountain; the delighted eye wandering up green summits near to which was heard the tinkling of the sheep bell, and rising still upward over bare rocky cliffs, disclosing sparkling glaciers, and on over every variety of mountain form and colouring, till it reached the distant, high up peaks on which rested the blue etherial sky.

We went straight across the room, out into the garden, and walked down it as if going straight into the river. Low exclamations of wonder caused us to look back. We were fol-

lowed by a little crowd of wondering children, their dark, dull eyes spoke more of wonder than in their patois speech was intelligible to us. They were all girls, and as miserable, pale, and dirty, as if they had lived in an English factory instead of this paradise of beauty. Timid, wondering, and evidently apprehensive that we were doing, or going where we ought not, that we had mistaken our way, and gone through the house instead of reposing within it, we gathered sufficient intelligence of their meaning to gratify them by turning back and seating ourselves in the dark and dirty room, which they probably thought far grander than the mountains and their snows.

There we were beset by a silent throng of little admirers: seldom has such deep and simple admiration been written on faces, or spoken by eyes. The dress of one traveller, the fair looks of the other, were alternately noticed, and indicated by one to another, though only by polite looks, and partly concealed signs—these generally followed by scarcely audible sighs, that told a depth of

emotion much too great for the occasion. They stood thus while we spoke in our own language, the sound of which seemed to be a still greater amazement; they commented in their own expressive way, on every tone and look and movement, but with an air of respect mingled with wonder on their poor little faces that was really consolatory to our vanity. One girl, the eldest, kept secretly sidling towards Agnes, with her eyes fixed on her robe, and having gradually reached her side, she furtively extended a finger and gently stroked it, as if to feel its texture. The achievement was the cause of triumph: in a tone of suppressed rapture she murmured,—"I have touched it! I have touched it," and ran from the room, followed by the whole party, who went to share the credit of her exploit.

CHAPTER II.

THE horses were refreshed, so we concluded that we shared in the refreshment. The road was better, and that made our spirits better also. The scenery which we had supposed incapable of much improvement, grew more and more delightful.

Between Arras and Marcous, the Val d'Azun appears in all its charms, rich, verdant, peaceful, happy-looking; one could with difficulty imagine its aspect under the total and dreary change that winter would produce. There are many scenes in the Pyrenees more magnificent, but few so

lovely: as is the case in human beauty so in that of inanimate nature, you admire one style, you love the other.

The valley is terminated by the mountains; there is no road from its further extremity save the Pass called the Col de Tortes, which affords a bridle path to the Les Eaux Bonnes. Just as we passed through a gate which enclosed the green amphitheatre on which the valley ends, and on which is the hamlet or village of Avrens, the sun dropped down in the unceremonious manner in which it goes to bed in the Pyrenees, without even looking up to say good night. After the extreme heat a sudden chill was almost painful.

We had the night before us to spend at Arras, and our prospects as to accommodation seemed rather gloomy. Through the iron-barred window of a house that looked like a prison we saw a man in the habiliments of a priest, having a much tattered volume in his hand, from which he was apparently instructing a youth who sat at the table beside him. The sound of our horses' feet made him dart to the iron bars of the

window: he threw away the book when he saw an arrival of travellers, ran down stairs, and came out to meet us, looking eager and anxious, and very much perplexed.

Our guide saluted him as Monsieur l'Abbé: and Monsieur ran from one to the other of our party, so eager to assist all, that he failed to assist any. Having succeded in securing us so far as to get us into a large, cold kitchen where—

> "The fire upon the hearth was dead,
> The smoke in air had vanished,"

and no one but ourselves appeared, the Abbé ran about calling out Mama! Mama! like a child frightened at our presence; though he was a man of between thirty and forty years of age; but he certainly wanted his mammy on our account as much as his own. She was not within reach of his imploring, half-crying voice. He ran for wood, still calling Mama! Mama! made a fire sitting on his knees on the hearth, his cassock spread out around him; got the bellows and

blew it to a flame: ran out to shew where the horses were to be put, and ran back to us, still saying piteously to himself—Mama! ah! Mama!

At last his Mama, red with haste and anxiety, came running to her son's help. Omelettes were made, trouts were broiled, tea got ready, the whole house placed at our disposition, and all that the most nimble of Abbés and kindest of Mamas could do for our solace was speedily done.

We left them to prepare our suppers, and being warmed, we went out to look about us, and to inspect the curious old church, with the equally curious title of Pouy le Hun.

The Val d' Azun terminates, as has been said, in an amphitheatre which is backed by the mountain: its area is a level green, called in the semi-Spanish dialect of these Spanish borderers—the Prado, along the edge of which flows the mountain stream. The church, which is very old, is literally founded on a rock: its floor is the solid and uneven rock; during the

great Revolution the soldiers amused themselves by cutting to pieces all they could destroy, while they used it as a stable. The poor sexton exhibits some of its half destroyed ornaments which he says bear marks of a coup de sabre.

We entered it. Some of the poor, hard toiling women of the mountains were there, kneeling or sitting on the chairs, praying or meditating; closing a day spent in labour and care with reflections on a time when these shall cease: ending it in an approach to Him who saith to the wearers of crowns, and the eaters of bread earned in the sweat of the brow—Come unto me, and I will give you rest—Peace, the World does not give: Peace the world cannot take away. We went in again and took our supper, and then drew round the hearth where the Abbé and his Mama sat with us.

They would know if we were English; and when we said yes, they looked sad, and said we were then protestants, and did not believe in God.

"O! but we do," cried Talbot, indignantly.

"Do you?" said the old woman, in surprise.

Her clerical son said something to her in the patois, which she instantly repeated to us in French.

"He says it is in Christ you do not believe."

"But yes, in Him also. He is our only hope of salvation."

"Strange! You are not then protestants?" cried both at once.

But the Abbé considered within himself a little, and added:

"Ah! it's in the saints you do not believe."

"Yes; in the saints also."

"Astonishing! Your religion seems as good as ours," said his mama.

"No," said the Abbé, taking refuge in the patois. "No: the protestants are infidels, and the English are protestants."

"You may perhaps have been converted?" said the old woman, looking to each of us, "for to me your religion seems the very same as ours, only you observe it better, for the guide there says you sit still all Sundays."

"It is not quite the same," said Mr. Talbot, who, being Irish, had no objection to a "bit of a row," even on religious matters.

The Abbé hereupon interposed his patois:

"It is in the Blessed Virgin the heretics do not believe."

His mama crossed herself, and muttered a prayer.

"Indeed we do," I cried, hastening to alleviate her terror. "We do believe in the Holy Mother of our Lord."

"See there now," she exclaimed, in real delight; "I knew that could not be. You looked too good for that."

"But we do not pray to any saints," said Mr. Talbot.

The old woman was not so horrified as she had been.

"And why not?" she asked.

"We only pray to God," he replied, without directly answering her.

"And when you are in any trouble do you only pray to God yourself without ever asking

any one to pray for you?" said this poor, uneducated woman of the wild mountains.

"Yes—undoubtedly—at least if I were in trouble I might do so."

"Well, we are all in trouble—in trouble for our sins, if we are not in other trouble; and so you should ask the saints to pray for you?"

"O! I would only ask the living."

"What! do you not then believe in the life everlasting?"

"Certainly."

"You do not then think the dead are gone from us?"

"No: not exactly."

"Well, if the saints have only gone nearer to God, and have not gone from us altogether, don't you think they can ask God for what you want as well as any friends living in this wicked world can do? But perhaps you think they have ceased to know anything—that they are just gone into a long sleep. Now, we do not believe that, and we ask our good friends up there with God, to help and pray for us just as we would

ask a good friend here on earth to give us such help."

"But we should only pray to God through Christ."

"That is true: all must go through Christ: but why do you ask your friends on the earth to pray for you, and not your friends up there in Heaven?"

"Because it is idolatry to pray to any one but God," was the reply; and satisfied with this amount of controversy, I left them and went out on the Prado.

It was now moonlight. The full moon was walking in brightness; the rapidly flowing stream ran on in broken lines of gold; the snow on the mountains looked coldly pure; the old church on the rock stood out in solitary distinctness; its windows gleaming in moonshine, while the dark shadow of the mountain fell at the back.

The deepest stillness was around; no creature was seen; one might have thought oneself miles from human habitations, if the blaze from the hearth I had left did not flash out from the

open door, and at a little distance in the widened vale neat white farm houses shewed lights twinkling from windows. I walked along the bank of the rushing, narrow river. Perhaps the discourse at the hearth within had had a sort of spiritualizing effect on our minds. I felt myself holding communion with the dead. I was not praying, but communing.

There is something at all times spiritual in the light of the moon: but how beautiful is that light in the Pyrenees, amid mountains, snows, and torrents. It is just bright and clear enough to reveal what is lovely, what is ideal—or give food for ideality, rather—and to keep in shade all that is too matter-of-fact or repulsive.

It fell on the tall Pic de Gabisos, and glanced on the green Sierras; shone bright on the picturesque church up high on the bare, dark rock, slept softly over the verdant plain, and gleamed in whirling sparkles of gold on the ever flowing stream.

The houses of the hamlet were only a dark mass in the clear landscape. O! man, paradox of

littleness and greatness! how do we shrink from thee, and thy works, and ways, when we would feel ourselves alone in the presence of Nature's majesty? Yet how often, too, when we lose ourselves in contemplation of an immortal destiny, does all the dread magnificence of Nature seem as nought in comparison of thee?

Wandering from the Prado, a little path led down to where a brawling stream dashed beneath a mill. The mill was at rest, but the stream was busy. We usually speak of water as being always the same; ever and ever the same ever flowing stream. Not one drop is the same; ever-passing from their source, as generation after generation, people after people—perhaps world after world—pass on, and on, and on

CHAPTER III.

At five o'clock the next morning a smart tap at my door made me awake with that start which is so unpleasant, and almost sure to give one a headache. It was not Monsieur l'Abbé, but his mama, sent by him to tell us snow had fallen and the passage of the Col de Tortes was impracticable. The good Abbé had been so eager to get us in, that we suspiciously believed he was not eager to let us out. So after a breakfast of our own tea and some scarcely eatable bread, we ordered our steeds and set off to explore. Our guide soon convinced us it was wiser to return, and with regret we did so.

The Abbé was on the look out, and seemed ready to run in, light the fire, and call his mama. But we only nodded our adieux in passing, leaving him shaking his head very wisely as we went off in a direction contrary to the Col de Tortes.

The view by the early morning sun was most beautiful; the changes of colouring are a constant source of varying beauty; nevertheless we were soon forced to remember the words of the patriarch, "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night."

The sun was coming out in fervency; it was exquisite to see it gilding the high mountains, sparkling in gems of gold in the white glaciers, while where its rays had not yet reached, the mountains lay in a cold, stately blue colour, and a blue, soft, ethereal haze hung between the sun and us, tempering and toning down the irradiating glory that was rising on the heads of the eastern peaks. We stopped at the disagreeable inn of Argelez to encounter the provocation of a bad breakfast at a rather high charge.

In this valley, though adjoining that of Azun,

the winter is shorter and far less severely felt, than it is up higher in the mountains; the snow, they say does not rest on the ground for many days at a time. Both these charming vales are in happy circumstances, comparatively speaking; if few are rich, none are horribly poor, wealth and poverty, as these terms are known in England, are utterly unknown here. At Arrens the winters are severe, for a position at the foot of a mountain renders it liable to be overwhelmed by avalanches of snow. At this season the well-to-do farmers find indoor work for people who have none of their own, and then the latter shut up their houses, and go and live with their employers, where they get diet, lodging, and fire, in return for their labour in knitting, spinning, weaving, basket making, attending to dairies or cattle, with other such things. The indoor industry is very great in winter, and good workpeople can earn wages, or make money for themselves, so as at the approach of spring to be able to re-open their own homes with as much as from two to three pounds—a Pyrenean fortune

—in their pockets, wherewith to begin their summer life on their own account.

From scenes of loveliness we passed on to the frightful little village of St. Pé, full of furnaces, blackened men and boys, yet where I saw in one of the latter, the most perfect specimen of human beauty I ever beheld. The clang of hammers resounded on all sides; yet just in this place, of all spots in the whole compass of the Pyrenees, I took it into my head to get ill. It was, I am sure, the result of that tap on my door by the little Abbé's mama. Such a headache as I had! I sat shivering in a black hut. To mount and go forward I felt to be impossible; to stay where I was appeared to be equally so. My friends assembled in consultation. And finally it was agreed that a cabriolet should be hired, from Lourdes, and the Spaniard, the good Josez, conduct me in it to Les Eaux Bonnes, where I should rejoin my party.

The arrangement was no sooner made, than I found myself once more alone, with an aching

head, and the clang of hammers and anvils all around me.

Josez went on with the others to bring back the cabriolet, taking my dear pony to be left there. And now, thought I to myself, when they were all gone, if I were to be left here for ever; if Josez and the pony were to disappear as dear Monsieur, and the melancholy Jacques, and every one else have disappeared whenever I most wanted them; and under a sense of desertion I was going to cry, that customary relief for all our woes.

I was diverted from the intention by feeling something press on my arm. It was a very little child, not so much perhaps as three years old; it had nestled close to the stranger's side, attracted, doubtless by some strange, unapparent mental sympathy; its white face leaned against me; its dark, sad eyes that seemed never to have looked on joy, were turned up to mine with such an expression; poor little soul! it did not speak English, but those eyes said, as plainly as Eng-

lish words could do—take me, I have no one to love me, no one to care for me. It laid its thin arms on my knees, and rested there, its eyes, so large, and dark, and sad, communing with mine.

There was no need to cry: the cabriolet came, and good Josez had got two cloaks in it, and, having placed me therein, he took the reins, and we set off. I felt it a great relief to be thus conducted after having so long conducted myself.

At the next inn we came to, he was so fortunate as to be able to buy a cold fowl, and a bottle of the ordinary wine; we took these in the cabriolet as provision stores; but he forgot to get either bread or water, and when we stopped to get a bottle filled with the latter, the people of the house asked for the water just half the price we had paid for the wine.

We continued a pretty and pleasant road till we came to the small town of Bruges, where we found a baker, and just as we left it the sun went down and the moon rose up, as if the one

had been watching the departure of the other; and then Josez drew up in a pleasant moonlit grove, and let me eat my dinner. After which moonshiny meal, I reclined back among the cushions of the cabriolet, and, all unused to such luxuries, and being still ill and fatigued, I yielded myself to a state that was not quite sleep, yet was next thing to it. Josez, believing I slept altogether, took to singing, perhaps as the boy who

"Whistled as he went, for want of thought."

But his fine, deep, though clear voice was quite delightful in my drowsiness, as he sung old Bearnais and Spanish songs. Occasionally, through half closed eyes, I saw a charming scene; the road was shaded so thickly at times with trees that each winding seemed to bring it to an end; the moon, at times hidden, at others bursting out full before us, gave a diversity to other aspects. Sometimes it would be hidden by a mountain covered with fir or arbutus trees; sometimes a bare, dark eminence would conceal

it; the next moment it would re-appear over mountains or peeping through trees, and thus was continually plunging us from darkness to light, and light to darkness.

The road was quite solitary; on the left were mountains bare and steep; on the right, hills and woods. As we approached the small town called Louvie, we met a peasant gravely conducting his cart drawn by oxen. This man politely guided us to a house called by the important title of the Hotel des Pyrenées. It was now just eleven o'clock at night. I was ill, weary, anxious to lay my aching head to rest; but these sensations were dispelled for the time by a sight of the extraordinary apparition that came to receive me.

A tall, erect woman, with a light on her head, came to meet me, took the cloaks, cushions, and et ceteras in her arms, and preceded me to a chamber.

A very long candle, in a very long candlestick, stood on her head; at first sight it was like a ghost in a child's story. Afterwards I

fancied she carried the light so in order to have her hands at liberty; but no, she arranged my bed, she brought my tray, she went out and came in with empty hands, but the candle was always on her head. With a grave face and unbending person she moved about with uncommon alacrity, and seemed conscious of my admiration. Certainly her head enlightened the sphere in which she moved more than those of womankind generally do. I found this was the singular fashion at Louvie; one I never heard of or saw anywhere else.

We were off again, as usual, at five in the morning; stopping at Larens, a village, like most Pyrenean ones, ugly in itself, and beautiful in its situation. Near to it we saw the fine blocks of marble lying by the wayside; they came from the quarry of Louvie Soubiron, which has assisted in the splendour of La Madeleine, of Paris—an exquisite edifice, but an unchurch-like church.

Here the road divides, one branch leading to Les Eaux Bonnes, the other to Les Eaux

Chaudes. Now the road to the left, leading to the Good Waters, would also lead me to my travelling companions, and was the one I was therefore bound to take. But travellers are always perverse, and I plead no exemption from the charge. I was seized with a desire to turn to the right instead of the left, and visit Les Eaux Chaudes first, and I knew my present party intended to make some stay at the other town, where they were to rejoin the dear old lady who had introduced me to their pleasant society. The cabriolet accordingly turned to the right, and we went to the Hot Waters, which are the very coldest of all the Pyrenean springs.

The Pic de Gers lifts its towering head above Larens, and we kept that curious and conspicuous object long in view. Here we were so completely in the mountains that I began to regret I was not on my pony instead of being in a comfortable, but heavy carriage. From the spot where the road parted to Les Eaux Chaudes is only two and a half English miles, but it took much more than an hour to get over

that distance. Indeed, at first it seems hard to tell how you are to get on the road at all. The entrance appears shut up by a vast mountain of bare rock, that did once entirely blockade the pass. It is called the Hourat, and has been excavated of late years; for the circulation of travellers' gold supplies the place of Hannibal's vinegar, and tourists and water-drinkers find a passage cut for them through the Hourat.

The ascent to this passage is very steep, and the mass of rock overlapping the perforated passage, causes the opening at a distance to be invisible, and on a nearer approach gives it the aspect of the mouth of a cavern which you think it impossible to enter in a carriage, so that you are taken by surprise on finding there is quite room for two vehicles to pass if they chance to enter at opposite ends of the tunnel.

This is the imposing entrance to a truly grand defile, lined with steep mountains of rock, from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet high, and in some spots perfectly bare, in others clothed to their summits with box, spiry pine, or lighter

brushwood; then again presenting dark precipitous walls, streaked down their surface with lines of white, the foamy torrents that pour from the waters to yield their tribute to the Gave de Gabas, the river whose chafing waters are heard hoarsely roaring in their sunken bed.

By such a road you suddenly enter on Les Eaux Chaudes, a small nest of houses, without any suburban appearances to prepare you for an entrance on the town you were looking for.

I believe the impressions of travellers concerning places they visit are really very much influenced by the nature of the hotels at which they descend. One would of course plead an exemption to a general rule in one's own person, but in regard to Les Eaux Chaudes—the apparition of which was most pleasant to travellers who had not breakfasted, no exemption can we plead. The name of the inn I recollect not, but the most obliging and attentive of hosts was named Baudêt. He himself saw the breakfast —modestly ordered at two francs— laid out for

a single traveller, with cotalette, fried trouts, ditto potatoes, omelette, most exquisite fruits, good, though common wine, and coffee.

In the strength of such a breakfast, we went not only to taste the hot waters at the source still called Lou Rey, because King Henri IV., and his soldiers drank thereat—but at the suggestion of this excellent Baudêt, I was once again mounted on a pony, and instead of going direct to Les Eaux Bonnes, turned my face again to the plains of Arragon. I must, they said, see the defile of Gabas, the pass from the Val d'Osau to Spain, by which an enormous number of mules travel every year.

It is a grand and interesting pass, and would have impressed me much, if I had not had a bodily frame weakened and tired by indisposition, and a mind almost already overcharged with scenes of beauty. My eyes were spoiled too by that diversity of scenery which, as a pass flanked by rocks, the defile of Gabas must want. Most Pyrenean tourists visit Les Eaux Chaudes, and Les Eaux Bonnes direct from Pau; and

thus Gabas, and similar excursions around them, are visited with fresher feelings.

The mountains that hem you in are dotted with box, fir, beech, hazel, and other trees and shrubs of many blending tints, and your companion is the half-hidden, ever-sounding torrent. It must be a delightful morning ride for the water-drinkers, or tourists at the hot waters; a spot wherein one might think, some pain-worn health-seeker might love to rest for a little moment, and almost forget poor nature's sufferings, while viewing the mighty bulwarks of this mountain road, and thinking of that vast promise—"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; yet shall not my loving-kindness depart from thee, nor the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy upon thee."

We encountered a whole flock of mules coming from their native Spain; some of them splendid animals: the muleteers in their picturesque garb, gave liveliness to the scene. The day was bright and gave us a magnificent view of the

crest of the great Pic du Midi d'Ossau—seen very differently from the way in which I had beheld that of its, almost, namesake, the Pic du Midi de Bigorre.

When we arrived in the Plateau, a level platform at the end of the defile, the view of this fine mountain, as well as that of the Pic de Gers, might have alone repaid the exertion of the ride.

Around here the peasantry, though on the side of France, are much more Spanish both in appearance and costume. Some of them were splendid specimens of their class. The women mostly wore their long dark hair plaited, and hanging as nature seems to have meant it to do, at full length from the head. The men were handsomer, with dark, curling hair, and tall manly, but pliant figures.

It drew to evening as we returned; the moon, my friendly ally, arose to mellow and beautify the magnificence of the scene, and to shed that calm serenity on a wearied mind which moonlight generally can bestow.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN we entered the town called Les Eaux Bonnes, which is much larger, much gayer, more fashionable, and therefore more expensive than Les Eaux Chaudes, we found it looking much like a barrack from whence troops had just been dislodged. I never saw so forlorn a scene: most of the houses had shutters up to all the windows—there were signs over shop doors, but shopkeepers there were almost none. Over one, the well-known English words "Port and Sherry," figured in all large letters; but the sherry and port, with the man who had them, were not to be

found. The English had given up these good Waters for the season, and all other guests, it seemed, had done so too.

The few people who were visible, were evidently at a loss for something to do, or something to look at: the number of idle stable men told of a state of activity that had subsided.

My late companions, in such a state of affairs, were easily found: they were the only English in the town, and twenty voices at once proclaimed where they were lodged.

Agnes had a slight pout on her fine face—if indeed such a face could pout, when she said they had been kept waiting two days instead of one in that deserted town, and at the fine, cold, comfortless Hotel de la Post, where the host was so out of humour at other guests being gone that he could not be civil to those who remained, although he made himself all the amends in his power, by charging the latter double prices and giving them half the portion of food and attendance.

There are baths, walks, and waterfalls about

here in plenty; but how persons afflicted with disease of the chest, for which they say these waters are good, can manage to climb the promenade under a burning sun, I know not. That Les Eaux Bonnes is, however, a favourite among the waters of the Pyrenees, is clear, from the number of hotels and lodging houses, of which the neat and clean town is almost wholly composed.

The prettiest sight we saw, was the entrance of the splendid goats from their day's browze on the mountains. They return at eve, and come bounding along to the music of their own bells: their leader being as large as a tolerably sized deer, with fine branching horns that deserve to be called antlers. Indeed, at first, these magnificent goats might be mistaken for deer: They are of a size unknown to our country; their coat is long, brown, and silky, and as they spring along chiming their bells, their motions are bolder, but not less graceful than those of our deer.

These goats were all that gave animation

when we were at Les Eaux Bonnes, to that usually animated place. The season, I believe is over earlier there than at the other watering places of the Pyrenees.

I was not the least disposed to grumble at the prompt departure of my friends for Oleron, in the Basses Pyrenees, seeing that the goats were the only things I had to care for in this deserted town. But one cause of grief assailed me. As even a fancied resemblance of a dear friend renders the countenance of a stranger a pleasant object of study, so did I like to watch the return of the bounding goats, because they reminded me of the precious little pony that used to spring over blocks, or descend ladders of rocks, without calling into requisition any other power on my part than a due exercise of the organ of adhesiveness. But he, too, must be renounced now—and for ever!

Indeed I loved that dear little black pony; it was no silly sentimentality: neither was it any sentimentality that dictated the words that every one who has had the pure feelings of

nature in their hearts, have felt as if they too had breathed them; words almost too often repeated to bear repetition here.

"O! ever thus from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay,
I never loved a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away."

Alas! how the recollections of Mr. Dickens' market gardener comes in to turn to burlesque the sweet lines I could so well apply to my deer-like black pony, which will ever be blended with the memory of my mountain rambles, my good, melancholy Jacques, and my aimable monsieur. I can only say of it as poor Tasso did of his work,

"Thou, too, art gone, and so is my delight."

The plan of our proceedings was altered, as the region of our travels changed its character; our mountain passes were to be traversed no more; so ponies were exchanged for a couple of cabriolets, in one of which the married couple conducted themselves, it is to be hoped to their

own satisfaction, and in the other of which Josez was obliged to conduct me to mine.

Adieu, then I said to my pony; adieu also to the romance of travel, adieu to my mountain rides; there is something symptomatic in the sound of those lumbering wheels; mind and thoughts will be in unison with them.

Thus I was standing at the window murmuring and melancholy when the quick, cheery words "All right," sounded immediately beneath it; and they were echoed by half a dozen imitative voices in the little foreign accent, that seems a parody on our full-toned national announcement. All right! how often do we hear this provoking declaration with a bitter consciousness that we have no part in it, even while our movements are regulated by it. All right! cries the conductor of your omnibus precisely as you discover your pocket has been picked and you are penniless; or recollect that you have left behind the very article which you entered his omnibus in order to bring. All right! cries the stately guard of the railway train, as he leaves you be-

wildered on a platform, advising you to telegraph back for your lost luggage: and now—All right! says Mr. Talbot as he takes his reins, and the word is echoed by the many helpers who have acquired the art of speaking so much English, while I am standing at the window above them, murmuring at the very arrangements to which the phrase applies.

But my cabriolet is ready too, and Josez, as he settles me into it, lisps out "all ri-ight," and a dozen voices lisp the same, to my utter provocation.

So I will say no more than that we got to Oleron, where I saw more of beauty in

"The human face divine,"

than even in other works of the Divine hand.

The women of Oleron have left a pleasant memory in my mind so far as external appearance and manner are concerned. One of the sweetest and really beautiful of faces, looked so

very sweet when pleading with us to be converted; us, strangers, she had never seen before, never, in all probability should see or hear of again. Yet she thought of our salvation, and believing that we could not effect that because we were English, and consequently heretics, she spoke to us so sweetly, yet so earnestly, her black eyes pleading as expressively as her words, causing us to feel that at all events she was fully persuaded in her own mind, and to call to remembrance what St. Paul adds to the injunction to be so—"and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, the Lord shall reveal even this unto you."

Certainly the Bearnais, the noble peasantry of the recreant leader of Protestantism, Henri IV., are a much finer race than their brethren of the high Alps. One feels provoked with the French *departements*, always clashing as they do with our historic recollections of the ancient provinces, we scarcely know them under their modern names. We are annoyed to find the Bearn and Bigorre of Froissart are now the Low and High Pyrenees. But all through France the

same revolutionary process has passed, and to old world people it is vexatious.

Old Bigorre, or Les Hautes Pyrenees, is by far the most magnificent and interesting in its wonderful scenery; Bearn, or Les Basses Pyrenées, possesses a still finer race of people, and their language, poetry and music render them more interesting than the less civilized dwellers in the high mountains. There is something very piquante in the aspect and costume of the Bearnaises. I could not help feeling when one of those very pretty and attractive young women consulted us on the expediency of seeking a situation as governess in England, but said she had heard ladies there, treated their governesses with some disdain, how much happier she was, living in the simplest way in her own native province, than she could be in the artificial life of the great world of England.

One result, however, came of the young Bearnaise's zeal for our conversion: it led Mr. Talbot, who, being an Irishman, was of course a controversial protestant, to call to mind that he had

heard, or read of a protestant colony being settled somewhere in the Lower Pyrenees, and having existed in its localization from the time of—I think—the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by Louis XIV. And in the simple and traditionally religious region of the Pyrenees, the idea of a protestant colony of reformed times planting and maintaining itself in it, looked to us very like the paradox of a drop of water remaining in the furnace unconsumed.

"We must," he said, "go to see that colony."

It was Saturday evening, and naturally I added, "Why not?"

Agnes looked at me, and seeing he was bent on going to the protestant colony, added: "Let us go."

So we ordered dinner, and after dinner we ordered the cabriolets. Our object was to get to a resting place that evening from whence we could visit the land of Goshen which we had set before our imagination as existing in the Egypt of the Pyrenees, and yet avoid incurring the risk of being called Sabbath breakers.

That Goshen was situated near the Spanish frontier, at a village, or hamlet, called Osse. Our road to it led through the Basque country, which we entered at the village of Asaspe.

The moon rose while we were on our way—how beautiful is moonshine in the Pyrenees! I have said that often, yet am forced to say it again. To say it not would be to pass over the repeated mention of a friend's favours in silence, as if we were already weary of giving thanks. That moon, to which so much gratitude is ascribed, was at the full, and shining undimmed, when we entered the village called Asaspe, but no living thing except ourselves was looking at it. All the dwellers in that place might have been locked in the arms of Morpheus—if not in a still stronger embrace—all, indeed, was still as death. There was, apparently, no "entertainment" to be had there "for man or beast." So we drove right through, and went on under the moonlight, not knowing whither we went.

We came to a lovely scene. A bridge, over the Pyrenean Gave, at a place called Escot,

where the landscape beneath the moonshine was lovely, though not grand nor savage: yet when rocks are black and waters blue, or chafing, a moonlight scene is lovely. Here there is a Latin inscription carved on the rock to commemorate the first cutting of this road by the Romans, under one Valerius. We descended to look at it. The moon, clear, bright, and round, shone in the pure, cloudless sky, was imaged in the wide stream, and fell on the bare dark wall of smoothly cut rock through which our road had been carved, rendering visible to the eye the letters engraved by Roman hands. These words were graven on the rock, and like the rock have endured. But where are they—the mighty Romans? the thundering legions that shook the world? The rocks, the words continue—and they are dust.

When the present excellent road was made by modern engineers of France, the Roman inscription was discovered. We stopped there, and looked back at the valley we had come through, sleeping under moonshine. Solemn thoughts

crept into our minds, and with a sigh we went on our way.

The last town in France, on the frontier of Spain is Bedous, but we were too tired to wish to go on so far. A peasant whom we were so fortunate as to meet told Josez he could get us lodgings nearer than that; and satisfied with the tidings, as Josez, on this occasion took the lead and conducted all the party, I reclined back in the depth of the cabriolet, and gave myself up to a state, that, if not quite sleep, was not far from it. My guide, at such times, considered it right to pass the time by singing. And truly one might well feign sleep in order to induce him to do so.

The melodies of the native poet, Despourins, who might be called the Pyrenean Burns, sounded so sweet in the soft moonlight—sweet as the rocks and waters looked. The old dialect would be unintelligible, but the refrain—ouero ouero! rang melodiously in my half closed ears; nor have long years—and they have been troubled ones—dispelled the tones from thence.

Years, after all, do not subtract much from the spirit of poetry and feelings that have been given to the heart of youth. It is only experience that reveals this; in youth we suffer from the fear that the time must come when

"Our heart shall be grey as our head."

Not so—if to Nature and to Nature's God, that heart has ever been true.

I opened my eyes to see a high green hill—a green mountain, for it was so high that the moon looked to be keeping her watch on its summit, just before us on one side of the road; and at the other was a large white building, of a barrack-like aspect. There was no other habitation any where near; but a very large house and a quantity of stabling indicated that this was probably the place where the peasant had told us we could rest.

It proved to be so; this great house had been built as a speculation, under the notion that mineral waters were in its vicinity; but the

waters, if there, had never become fashionable, and the house remained empty, or tenanted only by the old man, his son, and the old woman who acted as servant and housekeeper.

We were soon seated at the kitchen hearth; the old man talked to us, and the son waited upon us, while the old woman was seeing to the arrangements for the night. He was a fine old man, whose information was not a little surprising in that humble station of life, and very out-of-the-world situation. He spoke of our great poets, "Sakespere," and "Saar Valter Scote"; and had many books, which he said passed the time that he spent in solitude. Though we do often meet a high order of intelligence among our English working classes, it would be hopeless, I believe, to look for a wayside innkeeper who was thus acquainted with the names of French poets.

How sweet it was to stand outside that door, and look at the bright green hills, so high and so green, with the moonshine on their tops, while the melody of the ever-flowing river was heard

in the stillness of night. I staid out there, and forgot to shiver till some one came to tell me I should certainly get cold, and that every one was going to bed. I found some were already gone, and was attended forthwith to my chamber by the old man, his son, and the old woman, each carrying a tall candle.

The next morning we drove to the ugly town Bedous, and recollecting that we were going to protestant worship, were doubly careful not to have the semblance of traveling on the Sabbath; so we left the vehicles there, and went on on foot. The service, we had learned, was at ten o'clock, and we used all diligence to be in time. That we, however, were somewhat late, was apparent when we reached the village of Osse. Every house was shut up, and the stillness of the place was truly Sabbatical. It was like the quietude that is externally seen in Scotland on Sunday. The houses were all closed up; whether there was anyone in any of them I do not know.

Instinct led us to a large, or rather a long

white house, the door of which was the only one to be seen open. As we drew near, the sound of one voice was audible, and a sort of buzz of others was not quite like that of voices responsive, yet was so much lower as to make us conclude they were so.

We entered a long, barn-like room, quite full from end to end. The men were at one side, the women at the other, as if woman could not even pray beside her natural enemy. This used to be the fashion among the methodists of England, and, I hear, is now the fashion in some of our churches. In this ancient protestant assembly there was evidently a reason for it, as it allowed the women to carry on their own little chat more comfortably. We saw, as soon as the very slight stir caused by our entrance had subsided, that the ordinary description of box at the upper end of the room contained a man of grave aspect who was either reading or praying or preaching. It is certainly hard in any dissenting assembly to discriminate between the two latter, prayer being generally

made a mode of instruction; but in this case the difficulty of discrimination was increased by the singular buzz of conversation, which formed a very droll accompaniment to the minister's words.

The women, sitting comfortably on their chairs, with their feet on the rail of those before them, discussed their family or their neighbour's affairs. Two, close beside me, were deeply interested in each other's robe; they were apparently new purchases. All the women were dressed in black, as it were for their holiday suit; these two took each her neighbour's robe in her hand, examined it, asked the price, shook their heads at the answer; the texture was felt, the price told, the verdict was given. Another had let her robe rest on the dusty floor; her neighbour lifted it, showed it to her, and both, amid audible murmurs, set to clean it. All the other women, without any exceptions that I could see, were occupied in a somewhat similar manner; their feet resting on the chairs before them, and their eyes or their fingers busily em-

ployed on the dresses of their neighbours, touching one in the front to make a remark on her shawl, or enquiring across two or three concerning some event of interest.

The men were more silent—that is a common fact in the natural history of the species —but then they were either in a state of dreamy quietude, or the listless vacuity of their rolling eyes told its own tale. Sometimes, though no daughter of Eve was amongst them, some little disturbance would arise in the men's quarter, and then the minister, without a distinct pause or break in his prayer, speech, or sermon, whichever it was, would interpose an impatient and loud demand for order and tranquillity.

The singing came on, and the whole assembly took up hymn books—the only ones they had, and commenced roaring or droning with all their might. After that we saw the prayer had not been meant for a sermon, for the minister, taking up a printed book, went up into a higher desk, and read out of it some

address on the parable of the Good Shepherd. In the midst of a short discourse, of which we could hardly distinguish a complete sentence, we were startled so as to jump from our seats, by a loud report, which I really thought was that of a pistol. It was made by a wild looking man who repeated it before our eyes, taking two hymn books and violently clapping them together.

The minister, turning to him, demanded what he had done that for?

"He sleeps!" cried the guardian of the church —the churchwarden I should say. "He sleeps!" he cried, pointing both the books full at poor Mr. Talbot, who was reclining back with shut eyes, though not half so soundly asleep as a great many proclaimed themselves to be.

"Be quiet," said the minister to the warden, "be quiet, or I will have you put to the door."

"What, then," cried the other furiously, looking up to the pulpit, "will you suffer that they sleep in the Temple?"

"Be quiet," said the minister again, "do not stir; be quiet. If you make more noise I shall have you put out"

And he went on with the parable of the Good Shepherd and His flock.

We saluted the pastor of this Land of Goshen on leaving "the Temple;" he invited us to rest in his house, which was just such a poor one as the others. He was a Swiss, and said the old man who had the permanent charge of this "cure of souls" was invalided, and he had not long been there. There was a school to be taught also, and the income, I think, was sixteen pounds a year. He had a wife and some very beautiful children to keep.

"How did you like that?" asked Mr. Talbot, of our Spanish guide.

"Monsieur should not ask," was the reply.

"Why not?"

"I wish, for my part," replied Josez, "to respect every one's convictions; but in order to do so, it is necessary not to criticise their worship."

"Nor to see it, perhaps?" added the controversialist.

"Monsieur is entirely right," Josez answered, with a still more acquiescent bow.

This incident made me wish, even then, in my first travels, what I have often since wished again with more earnestness, mingled, perhaps, with a little more vexation,—namely, that our Church, as well as our religion were a little more really and impressively represented on the continent in general, and in France in particular.

Protestant is a wide word: all infidels call themselves protestants: half of the rabble who come to England professing Protestantism, simply protest against all forms, creeds, and modes of faith.

The mistakes of simple people as to our English religion are excusable. Unfortunately our modes of worship do not do much to elevate our Church in the opinions of those, even, who may have better means of understanding what we are. The miserable rooms—often without any visible altar—the dull performance of the service

by some 'minister,' perhaps, who must live abroad, joined to the reputed wealth of the English, for whom that miserable place of worship is maintained, must act prejudicially on the minds of those who are attached to another Church and are accustomed to think that in honouring the building dedicated to God, they honour God also.

Even then—so long ago—I used to wish that we, too, thought so; even then I used to reflect that though the great God has declared that "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands," He has also declared that He will beautify His sanctuary, and make the place of His feet glorious.

Now times are changing, and our holy and beautiful houses, so long laid almost in the dust, are being re-edified. In Paris, too, there has just been commenced an English mode of Service, such as I then longed for.

Our pleasant rides had ended, and our cabriolet drives were about to end also. All journeys are but an epitome of what the journey of life is to

many, if not to most of the beings of this world, anticipation, disappointment, pleasure, loss, worry, mistakes, a little rapture, a good deal of vexation, weariness, and departure.

My brief life in the mountains had been a happy one—so very happy! But now I was to end it by going to my friends: by finding myself at home with them in their pleasant chateau near Pau. The time was come when they were to arrive there, and wherever they might have been all the time that I was pursuing them through the Waters, there could be no failure in finding them now, for they had decidedly taken the chateau; that, my present comrades knew for certain. But how was I to be got to Pau? If I were to ask how I was to go to Pau the answer would be, easy. I could very easily have set out by myself. But that was not—I feel compelled to use the French phrase, *comme il faut*—though our terrible English word—the annihilator of much that is natural and good in life—the word *proper*, is pretty much the same in signification.

Travellers in company very often remind one, as married couples also do, of the goats one sees yoked together on waysides, which uniformly pull diverse ways; one will go to one side, the other to the other side: one will go back, the other will go forward. In our case the married folks certainly pulled together; that was a comfort; but then they pulled towards Toulouse, and I pulled to Pau. Josez was called into consultation, and his solution of the difficulty was short.

Certainly, he said, if Mademoiselle wished to go to Pau, that was no reason why he should not conduct her there. Monsieur and Madame would not object to rest two little days in their Hotel, at the end of which he should return to conduct them to Toulouse.

All seemed easy now, and it was at once settled that I should be despatched with Josez, to my friends in the chateau.

We set off and we arrived: drove straight through Pau, without stopping, and came up to the chateau. We had passed through some pleasant scenery. The Val d'Aspe is well worth

exploring, above the ugly town of Bedous, at which place I abruptly ended my disquisitions on church matters. The mountain poet Despourins, whose Bearnais songs had become familiar to my ear, though their language was strange, was born in the village of Accous, close beside our route; an obelisk is erected to his memory. The picturesque Pont d'Esquil guided us by rocky and grand defiles once more to the frontiers of Spain. Beauty and interest accompanied our way, and as latest pleasures are usually thought the sweetest, perhaps that sentiment overcame the counterbalancing recollection of my delightful mountain rides; certain it is that I reached my chateau with the feeling of having infinitely enjoyed myself, and with something like a sensation that I should like to set out again and ride all over the Pyrenees.

We had come up to the same iron gate at which I stood before. I looked up at the house and saw it was no longer empty: the aspect of an inhabited house is so different—yet the difference is felt more easily than defined.

Jean saw us, and came out, and leaned his arms on the gate without opening it.

"I am come back, Jean."

"So it seems, Mademoiselle."

"Are the family arrived?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"That is well; I have come to stay with them."

"So it seems, Mademoiselle.

"Open the gate, and help to get down the luggage, Jean."

But Jean stroked his chin.

"The family are here; but not the friends mademoiselle expected."

"What?"

As I said the interrogatory word of surprised enquiry the hall door opened, and an English servant-man came out with a letter in his hand. I saw my own writing—a letter sent before me to announce my arrival. The man invited me to come in, saying his master desired him to do so. I went in, and saw a retired English officer of rank, who had brought his delicate

daughter to spend the winter near Pau. He informed me that my friends had never got further in France than Orleans, having been called to a distant part of Germany, or Austria, by an unexpected affair. He had, through an agent, taken from them the chateau they were unable to occupy.

I could hardly speak. I felt that choking sensation which is the precursor of a torrent of tears.

These strangers were very good: they gave me some consolatory tidings, and insisted that I should spend that night in the chateau. I did so, and during its silent watches resolved my future course and destiny. I could see nothing before me, and knew nothing to do but first throw myself on the stream and let it bear me on. For that end, I thought, I had better rejoin my late comrades and float on in their company. I shall then get to Toulouse, and so get round to the South of France, and do a great deal better than by floating by myself in that tiresome diligence back by the way I came with

poor dear Monsieur, with every scene and object recalling to me the memory of our journey together.

So, in short, I set out again with Josez in the cabriolet, and returned next day to my travelling companions, who, to my surprise, were not the least astonished to see me. This was annoying, for in such cases one always thinks of the vulgar proverb concerning a bad shilling. But Mr. Talbot, who knew something of my missing friends, cleared my brow by declaring he always had thought I was following a mere will-o'-the wisp, not over the moors, but over the mountains, and through the Waters.

So now farewell to my Pyrenees. I record nothing of our journey to Toulouse. What is strongest in my recollection respecting it is having been drawn in some curious diligence up a great mountain with nine horses and a yoke of oxen. The horses were harnessed in this wise—first three abreast, then four, then two, and lastly the great, drolly caparisoned oxen.

Many a year has passed, since; I have tra-

velled far, and dwelt among many people, but my young delight was in the Pyrenees, and there do I look back, wondering if *they* are unchanged, when all else has been so changeable—wondering whether if I went again to the High Mountains, I should find they were still "a feeling," when all feeling has been changed with me:—wondering whether if I found again my coal black pony and my good melancholy Jacques, for ever biting his leaf-stalk—would the same light heart accompany them. Ah, no! the last evening of another year has come while I write. Even that year has wrought its change, and, with regard to those long ago gone by, a silent voice seems to utter—Let the dead bury their dead.

CHAPTER V.

We are at Toulouse. My chateau near Pau, indeed is something very like a chateau en Espagne. The art of building castles in the air was, I suppose, first designed by the Spaniards in America, as from their projected castles in Spain the saying has become universally current. It is a pleasant employment; and perhaps our grief at discovering that the foundation of our fabric has been in the air, does not overbalance the pleasure we have had in building.

We were lodged in a quiet rural, or farm-house, like Inn—it did not deserve the name o

hotel—quite near the scene of the melancholy battle of Toulouse—fought by mistake it appears after Napoleon had abdicated his blood-bought crowns. A large old tree was before the door, which the people showed us; its stem being marked all over, as they told us, by bullets. And we walked over the field of bloody memory, and stood beside the obelisk that marks the spot where the great Soult was posted, and read its inscription:—'To the Brave who died for their Country'—was it for their country they died, or for the wild phantom called Glory? on whose false shrine so many noble souls were sacrificed.

It was here, while walking over that wide field, or standing at the base of that obelisk, that I thought of one who had so often and vividly described to me the battles of the "Great War." My first, my only master of French had been an officer in the Grand Army of Napoleon —had been an aide-de-camp—he was in exile for conspiracies against the restored Louis XVIII. He was still a young, and a very fine-looking man: our house was open to him, and from

him I learned whatever of French, Italian, Spanish, &c., I ever picked up. How noble he used to look in my eyes when he figured about the room describing to me some actions that made me long to be a hero, while, with true French animation he also described the gorgeousness of the uniform he had worn. And how often did my heart rebel against English power, when pausing abruptly, he would droop his fine head and sigh out with that hissing emphasis on the r, peculiar to French enunciation of the word—"Ah! mon Empereur!"

"My Emperor" sounds flatly after that word uttered in French by a devoted follower of Napoleon. Well, I got part of his story, and here it is in his own words.

STORY OF A FRENCH VETERAN.

"My father had fought with him in Italy, and fallen there. I saw Napoleon first when he came

to Paris in the fresh flush of his fame. My mother told me I might do as the son of Josephine did—take my father's sword and present it to the General.

"What will you, my child?" he asked, as I bent my knee and offered it.

"I will to follow you," was my answer.

My petition was granted. Napoleon was thenceforth my father and my leader. I was then fifteen years old, and I followed him, followed his course: ages, so long as the world endures shall retrace that course and marvel at it, for the shadow of the cloud that rests upon it now will rise up and let its eclipsed glory be seen. I left my mother's home; I left my little Marie; she was her adopted daughter, but already, only thirteen years of age, she was my betrothed.

And I followed Napoleon. I saw the sun of Austerlitz arise on many another sad glorious field. I followed him while the brightness of his glory shone over a terror-stricken world; followed him when his name made nations tremble; when his smile could lead the army of France to con-

quest; I followed the Eagle of France when it never cast down its eye from the sun of victory to which it soared.

And I was with him in darker hours. . . . I was with him when coward hearts betrayed, forsook him; when brave hearts were breaking around him. I was in the court of Fontainbleau among his Imperial Guard, when our leader said, "Adieu, mes enfans! adieu mes braves confreres! When the Eagle of France was pressed to the heart that had cheered it on to glory, and the Emperor left men who would have shed blood much more cheerfully than tears for him.

I came to fallen Paris. There voices cried, "Vive les Bourbons!" I stamped on the ground. It was my heart only that spoke. I had been long betrothed to Marie, yet we were both young. When the dream of my youth was over; when the army of France was no more, and its chief left like the caged Eagle, to chafe his towering spirit in an Island prison, then I

sought again the faithful heart that still was mine.

"Marie," I said, "France has fallen; her glory has died away. Love may still be ours; nothing more remains."

We were happy for a little time.

One evening a stranger sought our abode; he whispered to me intelligence that stirred my heart's blood, that made it boil. I looked at Marie; I knew her heart of courage. I went and whispered it again to her.

"He comes!" I said, "our Emperor returns to us."

She grew pale, she rose, gazed, clasped me in her arms; would have held me there. It was not a time to think of her, of her love, her tears.

"Mon Empereur! ma Patrie! these words were all I said. I vowed to return to Marie when the Eagle of France was unbound; when the sun of Napoleon arose again.

I was near Cannes, watching his descent; a

peasant's dress disguised me. As a peasant I met my Emperor; as one of his Guard I rejoined the unfurled banner of Napoleon.

* * * *

I was at Waterloo. I lay on the field of blood. The field that a few hours before had promised to restore to him the empire of the world.

"*Sauve qui peut!*" was the cry of fear of Napoleon's old soldiers that day; few who had worn his chevrons refused to dye them for the last time in their blood. I lay on the field amid groans and cries, amid dead and dying. The roar of battle came fainter and fainter on my sickened senses.

Some time had passed when I woke again to consciousness; the battle was done—done for ever; a soldier in the red uniform of England was leaning over me; tears had mingled with the blood upon my face. A voice sounded in my dulled ear, that had no connection with all that was around me; with all the maddening

feelings that were within me. It did not recall a thought of that charge that seemed to place the destinies of a world on a single cast; it did not recall thoughts of fury, overthrow, despair. It was strangely sweet, like the murmurs of the dove. And there was she, my wife, my poor Marie. She had taken that dress to seek her lost one.

Long before I was well the soldiers of France and her enemies were at peace. Napoleon was irretrievably ruined, the Eagle was chained for life on the ocean rock.

Marie thought she need no longer commend the delights of peace; she believed I was condemned to endure them. But could the spirit Napoleon had kindled be thus quenched at once? No; it was smouldering beneath the grey ashes. The soldiers who had followed him, could they creep and crawl in the lazy servitude of the restored Bourbon, whom the people called *Louis des huitres.**

*Louis of the oysters—a poor pun on the title of *Louis dixhuit.*

We soon made a conspiracy. It was discovered. I lay in prison; after a time I was liberated, and almost directly joined another; once more we failed and fled; my head was forfeited; but we contrived still to make a third and still greater conspiracy. This was the most promising; we numbered thirty General officers, and had hopes of success, for our Emperor was still alive. A traitor ruined our hopes. My wife saved me from being taken. I made my escape with some comrades. We spent three days and nights in an open boat on a lake, without a morsel of bread. Finally, after many difficulties, most of us got away, some to England, some to America.

I had very little money; I went to England—England, that detested country. I was among strangers; the English are a more civilized people now than they were after our great war had ended. Then they laughed at everything that was different from themselves; they always laughed at persons who could not speak English. I was poor, and for the rest I could just say two

words of their language, which I had learned I know not how; these were "Sir," and "Water." We often shook hands with the English we were to try to kill next day, across some of the rivulets of Spain and Portugal, and in this way I had, I believe, learned these words. I need not recall what I endured. I had some admiration of the English, but to love them is difficult.

One day I was in a sort of café, or news room, looking at a paper, by which I tried to learn some more words. A gentleman asked me a question about some political matter; I did not understand, and supposing he enquired concerning the coffee I was taking, I replied as well as I could, using one word I had just learned, "*c'est extrêmement* bad." The man stared, and then laughed. I saw he did not know the word and refused to be angered. The English are more civilized now; they do not laugh.

There was another present who addressed me in French; it was not good French, but to me it sounded most excellent; it was the first time any one had spoken to me. Finally this gentleman

became my friend; he was a man of much mind. I resorted to his house; he offered to pay me to speak French with him. My pride revolted, but what was the use? I was poor; my livres had come to francs, and my francs were turning to sous. I consented. Soon he wanted me to take pupils. I was indignant; but I said yes. So the aide-de-camp of the great Napoleon became a teacher of languages. Well, why not? Greater men than his aides-de-camp have earned their bread.

Once my friend told me he had got me a new tuition, as he called it, and told me to go to a house in a certain square, and ask for the lady. I went, and gave my card to the man who opened the door. He read it, and when I spoke a little half English, half French, he grinned, and went away, leaving me standing on the mat beside the door. I stood there long. There came some one else to the door, and when the man came to open it, I said:

"Have you been good to give ma carte?"

The fellow laughed again, and then in a very

loud voice, as if I could understand it better than a low one, told me the ladies were engaged, and I must wait. I did wait some more time, and then opened the door and went out.

But I learned some English at last, and I found some friends—yes, good friends—friends who made me forget much scorn and ignorance that angered me at first. So time lingered away; years were drawn out and ended. My life was dreary. I thought of Marie; I knew I was a father, but my wife and child were well cared for by her relations, and I would not bring them to share the fate of a proscribed exile. France remained under the dull sway of the Bourbons; her spirit seemed to be extinguished for ever. Her hero seemed to be in dust. It was not so; the fire smouldered still under the ashes. Ah! how true did your poet compose that farewell for Napoleon!

"Farewell to thee, France! but when liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, thou'lt think of me then;
The violet still blooms in the depth of thy valleys,
Though withered, thy tears may unfold it again."

Louis XVIII. had died; the Comte d'Artois

was Charles X. I watched: I saw the upshooting of some sparks from the buried fire. I watched; I heard of the proclamation of the ordinances; I stole away; I reached Paris in time to join the cry *á bas les Bourbons.*

They were fighting in the streets; I found in the house of an old acquaintance the uniform of the disbanded National Guard. Once more I was in arms for France, though its hero was no more. I saw many old comrades; I heard and spoke names familiar to my youth. When the followers of his father were around me, I strove to proclaim Napoleon the Second. A few voices repeated the name: they were but few.

The attack on the Tuileries was made, and I joined in besieging the palace of my emperor. Children and women had been fighting; a youth was often at my side. I saw him perform prodigies of valour, and every moment he cried:

"For my father! for my country!"

We entered the Throne Room together; he darted on and raised a flag on the pavilion, again uttering the same cry.

"Brave boy!" I exclaimed,

And reaching forward my hand, I aided him in planting the tri-colour on the spot where it waved in more glorious days. We planted that banner together.

A ball struck the breast of the noble boy; he made an effort to catch the staff of the banner—failed, and fell, uttering the words:

"My mother! I have fulfilled your wishes."

"But your mother?—unhappy woman!" I said as I raised him in my arms.

"She will not weep," he said, with a faint smile; "I die for the country and for my father!"

I took one of the velvet cushions, and laid his bleeding body on it.

Later in the day I was leaving that despoiled palace; a woman, with frightened looks, was trying to enter it. I saw her, gazed, opened my arms, and cried:

"Marie! My wife!"

There was a pause. Then Marie, looking up from my heart, on which she rested, said:

"And our son, my husband; he fights for you—for his country too."

"Marie! Marie! suffer me to live!" I answered her, for like a death pang struck the conviction to my soul that the noble boy was my son.

I caught my wife's hand; my brain reeled; I led her to the throne. I shewed her the young newly-lifeless body. I asked:

"Is that my son?"

She sunk down beside it, took the fair head, and laid it on her bosom. It hung like a broken flower.

"Look up my child! my Eugéne!" she murmured; "look up to see your father. He comes to bless you."

Eugéne—he bore the name of Josephine's son—looked up to me; he understood it all. His eyelids fluttered; a bright smile flitted over his features; he said, "My father!" and died.

Napoleon! France! I served you long! Here was my first offering.

Marie took charge of our son. They sum-

moned me from my grief; I rushed to avenge him. The fight was nearly done; the Swiss Guards were rapidly retiring. I went back towards the Tuileries. I saw my wife coming towards me; random shots were flying. I hasted on to meet her, but a crowd intercepted my progress. For a few minutes I was stopped, and then I did not see her coming on as before. I looked around, and at one side I found her lying on the ground—found my poor Marie—my suffering, loving wife. Her heart beat no more at my approach—no longer mourned my son. A ball had pierced it, and ended its love and its sorrows.

I had offered my own life many times, and in many fields. The memory of my chief demanded an offering that cost me dearer.

Here ended the narrative of my old French master. I have not heard of his own end. I am not informed of the part he bore in the

memorable and strange '48. He lived to see another return of his Emperor to France—the return of the poor dust from whence the mighty spirit had departed. He was among the few remaining veterans who knelt weeping beside the poor remains of the being they had idolized. He lived to see the name of Napoleon resuscitated, and the title of empire restored to his country; but he lived broken-hearted, lived to find the glory of this world a meteor; and died, it is to be hoped, in humility, penitence, and faith.

Peace be with the memory of my once brilliant and glory-loving French master! A true and kind friend he was to my youth. Little did he ever think how constantly and gratefully he was remembered by one of his pupils.

The tradition of Napoleon's resurrection which was maintained among his adherents in France, is not difficult to account for; but the curious fact that in England the interpreters of the Apocalypse most confidently declared that

his own personal resurrection would take place in one of those extraordinary instances in which a prophetic guess (for after all it was more a foretelling than an interpretation of what had been foretold) has been developed, or partially verified, by a rare combination of circumstances. The body of Napoleon arose, and returned to France; something like the spirit of Napoleon might be said to return there also when his nephew restored the empire. How far the prophesiers of England unintentionally combined with the tradition circulators of France, is matter of speculation; a strange story told to me in some year between the 30th and memorable 48th of our century, would seem to evince a sort of mysterious intelligence between them, which perhaps the English interpreters of prophecy believed to be more spiritual and supernatural than it really was. The story was told by a lady of rank and consideration.

An English nobleman, walking in Paris, or its vicinity, was surprised to see an officer, in the uniform of Napoleon's old guard, pass him

by: curious to see the man who appeared in this long disused dress, he hastened on and passed him in turn. The officer then stepping close to his side, whispered—"Napoleon is risen! We go to join him on the Rhine!" and so went off, disappeared, or vanished—I forget which.

Whatever plans might have been cogitating for the resurrection of the Napoleon name and dynasty, one can hardly conceive the utility of awakening English suspicions, and for my own part I should have been driven to the irreverent conclusion that the matter was what is called a trick, if it had not occurred to me that the spectral appearance was the ghost of my gallant French master.

CHAPTER VI.

THE lover of romance literature, who thought only of ancient Provence and Languedoc, might well be disappointed on a first acquaintance with the two departments of Modern France, which now bear those names of pleasurable associations.

There is a lingering remnant of the Gai sçavoir still kept up at Toulouse in the annual festival prettily called the floral games, whereat prizes in golden and silver flowers are awarded to competitors in prose and verse. The society claims to be the most ancient literary one in

Europe. The fame of its foundress, either as a blue stocking celebrity, or in any other way has not extended beyond the generally received belief that Clemence Isaure instituted Les Jeux Floraux, so soon after the decadence of the gai sçavoir as the XIV. century. The competitors for her prizes inaugurate their festival by going in procession to her tomb, and, of course, hearing a mass said. The golden sweet-briar, won by him at these poetic contests, gave the title of d'Eglantine to the well-known revolutionist, who himself died by the guillotine.

That singular age of the troubadours, trouveurs, or finders, of Provence and Languedoc, was cruelly cut short, together with the independence of their province, by the terrible home-crusade at the 13th century; when the glorious crusaders of the Holy Land, with others newly crossed for the work turned their arms against an unwarlike and pleasure-loving people, whose opinions were undoubtedly too bold and free, since the songs of the Troubadours turned to ridicule the dissolute lives and corrupt practices

of the clergy; and who sheltered among their numbers those who, strange to say, were at once of more unsound creed and more strictly moral life.

The imaginative character of both acted in different ways: of the former class Sir Walter Scott says: "The smoothness of the old Provençal dialect, partaking strongly of the Latin, which had been spoken for so many ages in what was called for distinction's sake the Roman Province of Gaul, and the richness and fertility of a country abounding in all that could delight the senses or soothe the imagination, naturally disposed the inhabitants to cultivate the art of poetry; and to value and foster the genius of those who distinguished themselves by excellence in it. Troubadours, that is finders, or inventors, equivalent to the northern term makers, arose in every class, from the highest to the lowest; success in their art dignified men of mean rank, and added fresh honours to those born in the patrician file of society. War and love—more especially the latter—were dictated

to them by the chivalry of the time, as the especial subjects of their verse. . . . . With the unanimous approbation of their hearers the Troubadours framed for themselves a species of poetry, describing and inculcating a system of metaphysical affection as inconsistent with nature as the (northern) minstrel's tales of magicians and monsters. . . . . During the flourishing time of the Troubadours, Love was esteemed so grave and formal a part of the business of life that a parliament, or Court of Love, was appointed for deciding such questions. This singular tribunal, it may be supposed, was more conversant with imaginary than real suits; but it is astonishing with what cold and pedantic ingenuity the Troubadours set themselves to plead and decide upon reasoning which was not less singular and able than out of place, the absurd questions which their own fantastic imaginations had previously devised."

Now just parallel with this description of the Troubadours is that of a portion, and a large one, of the heretics for whose subversion

or destruction the crusade was declared, and the inquisition first introduced. Imagination, in the twelfth century, ran still wilder on religion that on love and poesy; and metaphysical ingenuity was as actively employed on articles of faith as on any questions that were divided in the Parliaments of Troubadours.

The generic title of Albigenses was given at a later period to the various free-thinkers of that remarkable time. Of these the Catharists, or as the word would imply, Puritans, were "inventors" of a system of religious mysticism, which showed they possessed what Sir Walter calls the "fantastic imagination" of the Troubadours, whether it was exercised in the same way or not. Indeed that the opinions of the Catharists were largely held by the professors of the gai sçavoir there is little doubt. Their doctrines had originally come from the East, and in some aspects claimed kindred with Gnosticism. The world they held to be the work of Satan, the Eternal Evil principle: Heaven the work of God—the opposite Good principle. For the

eternal nature of Evil they quoted chapter and verse—he was a murderer from the beginning. Others denied the eternal existence of Satan: they renounced the Old Testament and the relation given by Moses of the earth's creation, and invented a curious mythology in its place, founded on the parable chiefly of the unjust steward, and that of the man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves. Out of the chaos of this earth, as it pre-existed (for as there is nothing new under the sun they seem to have been aware of that fact before modern geologists discovered it) Satan set to work to form a kingdom for himself in opposition to God. Adam was then an angel in Heaven and was sent by God to see what Satan was about. Satan caught him, robbed him of his robe of light, and bound him up in a body of mortal flesh.

The scripture authority for this myth was the story of the man who went down to Jericho: he, they said, was the angel Adam; Jericho was our world: Satan and his fallen companions were the thieves; but where were the priest and Levite?

where the good Samaritan? The thieves robbed the poor man of the light in which he was invested, left him half dead in a human body, and investing themselves in his robe of light these fallen spirits became the sun, moon, and stars. A strange theory!—we think not of them as fallen intelligences when they look down, like angel eyes, on our sin-struggling earth. As every sect is divided against itself, another division of these doctrines was, that Satan, the Eternal principle of Evil, had gone to Heaven and raised rebellion there, drawing down pure souls and causing them to inhabit mortal bodies: but each soul thus imprisoned had its duplicate still in Heaven—which are, we must suppose, the angels of little children that always behold the face of Him who is their Father—and these heavenly souls are constantly reappearing in human, miserable bodies, whenever a child is born into the world. Hence comes that mystic feeling of a prior existence to which imaginative temperaments are so subject: the feeling of having met before persons

whom we certainly never have met in the flesh ; or the conviction that words and tones have been heard in some unremembered time which we know have been unheard in this our term of life.

The re-imprisonment of these fallen, once pure souls, in mortal flesh they held to be cruel, and therefore marriage was disapproved of, and the multiplication of the human species condemned: and the doctrine of the resurrection of the body of course considered as undesirable and untrue. They, as well as other sectaries, quoted the Scriptures whenever they could make them seem to warrant their opinions, and when they could not make them bear their own interpretations they denied their authenticity. They denied the sacraments and most of the doctrines of the Church, but going beyond the recently proclaimed dogma of Rome, they asserted the blessed Virgin to be an angel, and Christ, He was God manifest in flesh, to be only an emanation of the Divinity, with the semblance of mortality. The raising of

Lazarus they interpreted as a parable illustrative of the resurrection from a death in sin. Baptism they considered to be only spiritual, denying the "outward and visible sign," and asserted John the Baptist to have been sent by Satan to prevent this spiritual baptism of Christ. The only baptismal form they allowed was the laying on of hands, and this which they called the consolamentum was of efficiency far beyond the sacraments of the Church. Those who lived after undergoing this rite were called Perfects, and aspired to a life in conformity with their name; those who died were immediately received into Heaven. It was therefore a rite eagerly sought by the dying, and in the majority of cases postponed till then. Of these Perfects and of their indomitable constancy in dying for the faith they held, we often hear in the frightful details of the crusade against the Albegenses.

It is undoubtedly a curious exhibition of human perversity to find people dissenting from the sacraments and teaching of the Church on the plea of scriptural authority, yet making what

use they like of Scripture; inventing theories of their own without other foundations than the interpretations they choose to put on Scripture, and then setting their own imagination in the place of all other authority. But this hath been, is, and most probably shall continue to be. It is also, however, to be lamented that the inventors of such ingenious religious theories should be burned alive.

What is more worthy of note than the details of the various religious opinions or dissenting practices of a time when, certainly, sects seem to have abounded nearly as much as they have done among ourselves after all the lights of the Reformation, which might, one would think, have brought minds to some sort of agreement on religious faith and practice—is the wonderful acquaintance with the Bible these divisions make manifest at a period which, emerging from what, according to the notions entertained by us, are emphatically called the Dark Ages, are represented to us as one when the Bible was a sealed Book; when the Scriptures were known

as a chained Bible. All sectaries of that time defended their opinions by the Scriptures, and some were known to boast that any who joined them would be able to expound the sacred volume in eight days' time. It was certainly from convents that the promulgators of such heresies mostly appeared; but the Waldenses and others who drew their tenets from the Word of God, possessed copies of that valuable manuscript, which when we reflect on the labour and care which it cost to write them, must have been no slight boon, before printing presses or societies tended to its plentiful diffusion.

Roger Bacon undertook to make any one read the Scriptures in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, by means of his universal grammar, in three days, and at such an era in general educational progress who can marvel that similar undertakings were attributed to the consciousness of power of necromancy.

The knowledge of Scripture which even the lower classes and ingenious artizans of Southern France possessed, in the 12th and 13th centuries

—so long before Luther unchained the Bible—is certainly worthy of note, and when we know that the manuscripts were copied by the long labour and diligent study of monks, and were held in a reverential care, which Bible societies of the present day have long done away with, it must appear almost self-evident that the church teaching of that period combined more of biblical instruction than we are in the habit of giving it credit for.

Sedentary employment and imaginative disposition led to the favourable reception of mystic and speculative doctrines among the weavers of Languedoc, who bore a principal part in the history of that unhappy time. The Waldenses were a distinct class, but it is probable that many of the disciples of Waldo of Lyons, who also claimed the authority of the Scriptures, were among the persecuted people called Albigenses.

They seem to have known the simple truths of the Holy Word in a manner more calculated to make wise unto salvation; while, from the fact

that the scarce and manually copied Scriptures were known and read among them, we may justly surmise that the Bible Luther is said to have unchained must have been put in fetters after the 13th century. Indeed the extraordinary use made of the Holy Writing by ingenious visionaries, probably tended to the restriction placed both on their circulation and on the right of what is called private judgment—a right, indeed, which generally makes each teacher a pope in his own circle.

Parallel with this singular religionism, and yet diverse in its nature, runs the history of the time of the Troubadours; Provence and Languedoc formed the home of imagination; the birth-place of invention, the seat of poetry, music, politeness, and pleasure. The gay Troubadours had been the first to assail in the ridicule of their rhymes, the vices of the clergy, and corruptions of the church; and to these popular songs may perhaps be ascribed the birth of that truly Protestant spirit which was extinguished in blood, together with the arts, civilization,

gaities, and independence of Languedoc and Provence. Certainly it ought not to be a question whether "error, heresy, and schism," should be discouraged as well as prayed against; there seems little use in praying against these in church, if we even appear to unite with them elsewhere: but other means than fire and sword may be employed for their repression. The crusade against the heretics of these provinces was one against liberty quite as much as against heresy; at least in its issue so it proved; for the sovereign lords defended their people whose lives were right though their creeds were wrong. But the territories of the nobles were coveted, and their refusal to deliver up to death their heretical subjects was not atoned for by the fact that they themselves were faithful children of the church. The Abbé Fluery states that the pretensions of Pope Innocent III. to their territories was apparent.

Count Raymond, of Toulouse, was of those whose conscience drew him in opposite ways; he wished to keep in allegiance to his church; he

wished to save his dominions and protect his people. He made engagements, and broke them. He was led naked, says the Abbé, to the door of the church in his own capital; he was scourged, absolved, received to favour, and took arms again in defence of his territories and people, yet died in the garb of a monk.

A firmer character was his nephew, the young Viscount of Beziers; his story is a fine subject for romance. He never left his church, and constantly declared he had no quarrel against it, while he as constantly asserted he never would give up the least of his unprotected people to the flames. The fate of his capital, Beziers, is perhaps well known, as is the reported saying of the Papal Legate when asked how the heretics should be discerned from the faithful—kill all; the Lord knoweth them that are His. The Abbé—for one would not like to quote any protestant authority—gives another version of the sack of Beziers; he says it was fired and burned to the ground without the knowledge of the leaders of the army, and by the soldiery alone,

who killed seven thousand people in the Church of the Madelaine alone, adding with devout simplicity—"Ces deux circonstances furent remarquées comme de punitions divines, tant á cause des blasphèmes que les heretiques disoient contre cette sainte, que du meûtre de leur vicomte qu'ils avoient commis dans son église."

The crusaders, he adds, then marched to Carcassone, where the Viscount, young Raymond, had taken refuge with all his terrified people; they attacked the outposts, while the bishops, abbés, and all the clergy sang, "*veni sancti spiritus*" with great devotion.

One feels so indignant and impatient at all the slanders against the Roman Church in the present day, that it is only in the words of the confessor of Louis XV., the Abbé Fleury, one would like to speak of such things. But he tells us in simple French how the crusaders "burned the heretics with great joy," and relates a curious story of two having been brought before our terrible countryman, Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the leader of the

host, one of whom was charged with being irreclaimable, in fact, a Perfect; the other was declared willing to renounce his errors.

"Burn them both," decreed the pious leader; "the one merits the flames; if the other is sincere in his recantation, the fire will serve to purify him instead of that of purgatory."

"But behold," says the Abbé, "the result. They were both bound to the stake and cast into the fire, which soon burned up the impenitent heretic, while of the other, who wished to recant, it only burned the cords that bound him, and he came out of the flames safe and sound!"

Perhaps nothing can be much more unlike our romance notions of old Languedoc and Provence than the actual state and appearance of these departments of modern France. Successive seasons of violence may have left some impress on the manners of the people in the south of France, for civil war is always more or less destructive of the finer feelings, and consequently of refined and gentle manners; added to the dreadful thirty years of religious wars in the

XIII. century, there have been the wars of the fanatic Camisards, and the infidel barbarities of the great Revolution. So that it is not so wonderful if the people even in common conversation seem as if they were on the verge of an explosion; they talk as if contending for life and death; not here, certainly, for the people here are much milder than at Avignon, and other parts still more to the south. The country itself is unlike the ideas we have formed of the home of the imagination, the seat of the muses and arts. Bare, flat, sun-scorched, grey, abounding chiefly with the shrubby olive, so unpicturesque and graceless, so dull in colour; it is quite unlike our fanciful vision of that gay Languedoc, to whose chateaux went troubadours with rebeck and lute, singing lays of love, and reciting poems in competition.

Alas! here in its capital are monuments to remind us how all this, and far more than this, was swept away with the besom of destruction. The Catharists contended that it was wrong to destroy even heretics because our lord said the

tares were to grow among the wheat; but the clergy argued and asserted that the tares were not intended to remain to hinder the growth of the wheat. Between them they managed to destroy a good deal of tares and wheat together.

The amusing glimpse which that genius of which we are not yet perhaps sufficiently proud —the genius of Walter Scott, gives of the mimic court of good King René at Aix, the capital of old Provence, shews how a remnant of the old gay life—the pantomime, as it were, of gâi sçavoir, languished on, when from its ancient independence that province passed to the house of Anjou, and finally with Languedoc, became annexed to the kingdom of France.

The frivolities he describes, as so vexatious to our proud Widow of Henry VI. Margaret of Anjou, are less consistent with her state and temper than are the words in which the historian, Sismondi, the fall of these once interesting provinces:—"In their servitude a few plaintive songs were heard, but the muses fled from a soil polluted with carnage."

CHAPTER VII.

PUTTING the question of their heresy or piety aside, there was romance enough in the story of the brave young leader of the Albigenses, Raymond of Beziers, to lead me to wish to visit that fine old feudal fortress so associated with his name. The old town of Carcassone is a most extraordinary place; the new one a quiet and thriving town of business.

On one of the abrupt eminences rising from the plain of Languedoc, stands, with its filthy surroundings, the same fortress which they say Romans and Visigoths held, and within which,

in 1210, young Raymond undoubtedly stood at bay against the host of white-cloaked crusaders.

It was after the horrible massacre at Beziers, his capital, that the Viscount, only twenty-four years of age, shut himself and his people into this stronghold, enclosed within double ramparts and towers, part of which is supposed to be of Roman erection. His uncle, after resigning his castles and territories, had been led with a cord round his neck to the church of Toulouse, and scourged before the altar. The struggle of the young Viscount was therefore deadly. There were with him those who, like himself, did not dissent from the Church, but spurned at tyranny; there were with him, no doubt, many of free opinions, lovers of gaiety and pleasure, such as troubadours were, but there were others also of a pure life, and it may be hoped of a pure faith. The contest, however, was one against the liberties and rights of a still independent province.

For a time did the defences of Old Carcassone withstand the assault of the immense host

that had encamped before them. Don Pedro of Arragon—himself no insignificant knight and troubadour of his time, and the uncle of Raymond—came to the Crusader's camp in the hope of making terms for the besieged.

"Were it only for myself," said the Viscount, "I swear I would die of famine sooner than surrender to the Abbot. But we cannot maintain the multitude of peasants, of women and children who have taken refuge with us."

The terms offered were permission to himself and twelve others to leave the fortress. To this Raymond answered:

"Sooner than leave the least of my people to be sacrificed I will be flayed alive."

But after enduring all the horrors of want of food and water, there came a message of invitation for a parley in the Crusader's camp with the gallant defender of the fortress. He went, and returned no more. Some say he was poisoned in prison. Fleury asserts that the besieged were allowed to pass out "en chemise," but most authorities state that they retired by a cavern

passage, made known to them beforehand. Don Pedro, the gallant King of Arragon, fell at the battle of Muret, fighting against the Crusaders. Simon de Montfort, that man of fiercest zeal, is said to have shed tears over his body.

Slowly and toilingly we ascended the hill to the Fortress; filthy beyond expression and description is the entry to the old castle. In the church we saw the tomb of De Montfort, who was killed by a woman's hand at the siege of Toulouse. He is said to have been hearing mass when the alarm was sounded, and hastily saying "Lord, let now thy servant depart in peace," he rushed from the church before the service was finished, and a tile cast from the wall rather ignominiously ended the life of the famous crusader, Simon De Montfort, Earl of Leicester, who has gained a more unhappy renown by his wars against the Albigensic heretics than those against the infidels in the Holy Land.

While we stood by the red slab that marked his tomb, a young Frenchman, who seemed in-

terested in the antiquities of the place, drew near and asked us whose tomb it was. We said the two first names in French but left Earl of Leicester in English.

"Ah! yes," he said, "it was he then who in this castle fought against the Christians."

The grass-grown, silent streets and antique houses are curious and interesting; but some of the approaches are so revolting that all the pleasure of a visit is taken away, and one feels, while elevated at a great height, quite incapable of drawing breath.

The new town of Carcassone, indeed the only town now known by that name, for the old one is called the Chateau, or Fortress, is the most opposite in all respects; clean, cheerful, and common place.

There was nothing to interest us in it, and being located at a most disagreeable Hotel, where men, women, and children, like others of the South of France, seemed always to be on the brink of an explosion, we resolved to go forward that same evening by the boat that traverses the

great canal du Midi—the vast water-work of Louis XIV., which connects the Mediterranean with the Atlantic. The canal boats, we were told, were not very pleasant; but as they afforded the only conveyance we could well use that evening, we made up our minds to go. A wonderful instance of travelling agreement. Little did I imagine what it was to cost me!

At nine o'clock, on a most extraordinary dark evening, we left our disagreeable hotel; bearing the singular title of St. John Baptist.

The bureau, or office, was full of people; gens d'armes, and officials of all sorts: the clatter of tongues, and glare of lights, were not at all in unison with the tone of a mind full of historical romance, and other nonsense. I looked out of the glaringly lighted office, and saw a deep, dark blue sky, without moon or stars appearing. The vault of heaven was high up, so very high, and so very dark, and yet without mist or murkiness. I could see the deep blue canopy, while all beneath it was shaded in darkness. Made up for travelling at night, and fully intending to sit on

the deck of whatever kind of boat we had, I was enveloped in a thick, fur-trimmed mantle: this I threw off, and—with what sort of indistinct, unintelligible presentiment, I know not—I also took from my pocket a number of great five franc pieces, which were the change, in part, of the last of my English ten pound notes. These I put into my small Russian leather writing case, which had come to be almost a part of myself—being always carried in my hand. On this occasion I left both it and my heavy mantle on a bench, and with only a light silk scarf, pinned on each shoulder, and tied in a knot near the ends, so that the knot came almost to my knees, I went out for a silent, solitary stroll. I particularize my equipment, because in fact its nature was the means of my being recovered.

No sight or sound interrupted my ruminations: I walked on in the thick darkness, and in silence so profound that the common simile, you might hear a pin drop, could be as well applied to this as to any other species of stillness. Before I had gone for three minutes' walk beyond the noisy

office, all was thus still, solitary, and excessively dark. How far I walked I do not precisely know, but a sudden recollection that I did not know where I was going, and that the boat meantime was coming, caused me to turn. In doing so I saw a line of white, faintly visible by the side of the road, and that made me recollect that I had been walking in the road and not on the foot path. With some idea of the English footways dimly running in my brain, I turned to the indistinct white that appeared at one side, and walked thus quite across the road.

I felt my foot had no foundation: I felt I was falling. I did not scream—how wonderfully fast does the mind travel!—in that rapid and short descent, many thoughts, and one resolution passed through mine. That I was falling down some steps and would come smash on a pavement I was sure: that I should be bodily hurt I was also sure: that come what would I would go on my journey with my friends, and not be left in the hotel of St. John Baptist, without them—was my resolution.

But, splash!—there was no hard crash—a boom of water in my ears told me where I had arrived—in the great basin of the Canal du Midi! I knew it perfectly: knew it was black as the darkness around me: knew no creature, no sound of life had been near. Strange to tell, it is a moment much more dreadful to reflect upon now than it was to endure at the time, when every faculty of the brain seemed to receive a new keenness, and memory a new freshness. These words, as distinctly, but more deliberately than if uttered aloud, were internally said—"I am in the basin of the great canal. But I shall be saved."

I told myself where I was—I told myself with quite as much assurance that I should be saved. How?—by a miracle, or what other means, I did not think. Ah, at that moment the loss at sea of a fine vessel in which were many persons known to me came across my mind, and I recollected that I had heard it said if some of them had had the presence of mind to place themselves in a partly horizontal position

and keep their hands quiet they would float for a considerable time. I did so: when I found my rebel hands paddling with unavailing resistancy the overwhelming water, I kept them down. I called, loudly called, for help. But the waters prevailed, went over my head, and I felt floating—whither and where became rather shadowy. Only a feeling of going home remained, I thought of my distant friends—thought that no one would hear of my end; thought—and it was the only frightful thought—that suicide would be imputed to me. But even that one thought of pain ceased: fear I never felt. It seemed as if friends awaited me on an opposite bank, and I was drifting on to them. The name of "Jesus" passed through my mind, but without any sense of danger or of dread. I thought friends stood there awaiting my approach, and that wonderful name only passed with a sense of sweetness, over what was I suppose a dozing brain. I knew nothing more till I faintly heard the words in French—"Take her hand." I was conscious my head was rising;

I felt my breath coming, or going, I knew not which; then came acute agony; a spasm of dread—a sort of struggle for life. It was endured only while I was being drawn up the high wall down which I had fallen. Landed on the parapet I had fallen from, I had still sense enough left to bend my knees—it was meant to be in thanksgiving, but some one lifted me up, and I was carried away to the office from which I had so foolishly strayed.

There my friends and many more gathered round; the glare of gas light I could no more see than the faint glimmer of a candle in a thick fog. The gens d'armes were talking and ordering; Mr. Talbot and Agnes—the one raving, the other weeping: but I heard nothing; they spoke, but I could not reply.

All this time a dim vision was before me: I indistinctly saw a face that was as the face of an angel, but looking at me out of a cloud; it was full of pity and benevolence. I did not think of it at the time: it rested among my

confused sensations; for I was incapable of thought.

They took me back to the St. John Baptist, and I was put to bed—as a naughty child, who had been and fallen into the water, deserved to be.

At first some horrors, starts, and feelings of sinking down, down—one knew not where, much disturbed me; but amid all, I saw an angel looking at me out of a cloud. After some time I fell into a deep sleep, and slept so long and so quietly, that it was late in the morning when I awoke.

The remembrance of having had a frightful dream, soon came back to me. I had dreamed that I had been drowning; that I had been in the canal. Then I began to think. Why was I there, in the room of the hotel which I had certainly left to go to the canal boat? Then the angel that looked at me out of the cloud and had mingled in the frightful dream of the night, was again brought before my waking vision.

"What can it be?" I cried, starting up, and in the action felt my long hair all wet, hanging down my neck.

I spoke in English, as I asked the question of myself; but the sound of my voice brought the rude, unpleasant chamber-maid before me. I sprang out of the bed.

"Is it true?" I asked her. "Was I drowned last night?"

"Without any doubt it is true," she replied sulkily.

"Who saved me?"

"A person who has called just now to ask for you."

"He was dressed in white," I said to myself, matters growing a little more perceptible to me. "Yes, he was dressed in white, I recollect that —in a workman's white frock. And I gave him no reward."

"Will you see him if he calls again?" asked the woman, anxious to get away from the charge given to her.

"Certainly, I must give him some money;"

and I put on a dressing gown, and went and got out my diminishing store of five franc pieces and laid a little pile of them ready on the table.

Not five minutes afterwards the said chambermaid flung open the door, and without a word ushered in—not the workman in white—but my angel that had looked at me out of the cloud! I saw the same face; the same pitying benevolence.

I thought no longer of the five franc pieces. I put out my hand, and said only:

"You saved me."

He took the hand as a Frenchman does: had I been his queen conferring on him a post of honour he could not have "kissed hands" with more apparent gratitude.

"I had that happiness," he said, "it was the happiest moment of my life."

I believe his words did not exaggerate his sentiments: for such a countenance as his—a countenance rarely seen either in England or France, would plainly tell that to save a fellow

creature from perishing, must be to its possessor one of the greatest, if not the very greatest happiness life could give.

It was a beautiful face, but it was the uncommon expression of the countenance that was its chief charm and seen in the haziness of my blinded vision it is not wonderful that as he gazed in benevolent pity, yet with well satisfied joy, at the prey he had ransomed from the water, my bewildered, half-drowned brain should have formed a misty sort of notion that a good angel had loooked down on poor me from the screen of a cloud.

He was not in need of my franc pieces; he was a young merchant of the thriving town we were leaving. His custom was at eventide to walk out alone, to meditate, as Father Isaac loved to do; and strange to say, in one of these lonely walks he had been the means of saving some lives from fire, and now he had saved another from water.

The next day we all went on our way, but not by the terrible canal. My deliverer from it

was then ill, confined to bed, and obliged to be bled. Such was the result of his humane exertions, and I was quite well. Probably his agitation and fear had been greater. We met again, however, but I never saw the image of the angel in the cloud so plainly as I had seen it in the glaringly lighted up bureau. He told me that one means of his being able to get hold of me in the dark water was that my shawl floated near the surface. I recollected the manner in which the silk scarf I wore had been tied, and it was evident that the knot at the ends had somehow got entangled about my person, while the centre filled like a balloon, and being borne upwards, no doubt tended to keep me afloat.

On what small circumstances do our lives often appear to depend! There is an appointed time to man upon earth, and our lives are held in God's keeping till it comes; yet we so often say if such and such things had not happened, we must have been lost. So I say if I had not thrown off my heavy mantle, and if I had not disembarrassed my pocket of heavy five franc pieces,

I do think I must have been lost, notwithstanding that my angel in the cloud was trying to save me, for I should have sunk below his grasp, and before he could have reached me. The water there is more than fifty feet in depth. But to Him who "redeems our life from destruction" be all the praise.

A day or two longer was passed in the St. John the Baptist; then we went our way, and without let or hindrance, arrived as, in old-fashioned times, we used to say, quite safely at Nismes.

All was fresh to me then. I had dreamed about Rome, but never, never ventured to form even the ambitious wish to see it. So the Roman antiquities of this little Rome of France were a deep delight.

Our party first set off to the Pont du Gard, that most wonderful-looking bridge, which first met our view as we journeyed along the high

road at evening close, and, all unlike it as it is in reality, recalled to my memory the first sight I had of the Menai Bridge, when that bridge was among the marvels of engineering skill. I remember well seeing it for the first time through the gloom, when a Welsh mist was, as they say there, breaking its neck down the mountains, and the white suspension bridge swung slightly waving in the fog, appearing so strange and fairy-like in the wild scene, and I stood wet through on the bleak shore, where a small boat landed me, gazing on the mysteriously moving bridge that has so long ceased to be a wonder, and insensible to the voices of the clamourous Welsh boys, who wanted to conduct me elsewhere.

So did the Pont du Gard, the singular work of Roman hands, recall its very opposite work of art, the Menai Suspension Bridge. Instead of spanning the mist-covered river, it spans the lonely valley; instead of being designed to avoid the passage of the water, its object was to convey water; yet seen from a distance, and in

twilight, when its amazing strength and solidity were undiscernible, this curious structure, striding over the misty vale, recalled to me my then childish wonderment and ecstacy.

And here we are now examining the work that was made here by the Romans nineteen years, as it is thought, before the advent of our Lord. It stands, scarcely decayed; our tiny erections look as the labours of pigmies in comparison, and yet our scientific contrivances render the purpose of this colossal structure not only nugatory, but almost absurd. To convey water to the Fountain of the Nymphs at Nismes, for the fair Romans to bathe, was this aqueduct constructed. In these times of ours it would not seem half so incredible if we were told it was built by the giants in order to convey rivers of water for their daily draught. To supply the water of a bath for women! Certainly, says the advocate of progress and the admirer of modern discoveries, certainly our water pipes answer such a purpose much better. Yes; but

I wish England would leave a better monument of regard to her daughters—her women?

It was strange to sit in the deep, quiet valley, overarched by the colossal aqueduct, one hundred and eighty feet high, which conveyed in olden time the waters of some neighbouring streams to the Fountain of the Nymphs at Nismes, and to reflect a little on the history of this world of ours. Perhaps the Eternal City itself—not even Rome in her magnificent ruins—would afford more scope for thought than did this vestige of Roman power remaining thus in the rude soil that Cæsar conquered; France in the height of her civilization; modern Rome garrisoned by her army—the Roman name existing in history alone. *Sic transit gloria mundi* is often all the sum total of such reflections, and in ages to come some moraliser may so reflect on the pomp and power, the boasted arts and sciences of England and of France. Everything has its time under the sun, and each nation its appointed course to run.

"That which hath been is now," saith the

wise man, " and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

From the Pont du Gard we at once went to seek for its terminus. The terminus, they told us, of this great Roman aqueduct was to be found in the 'Fountain of the Nymphs.' The early morning led us there, and our guide was Monsieur Frossard, the well known antiquary and protestant of Nismes—one of the strongholds of Protestantism in France, and the birth-place of the world-known Protestant, Guizot.

While my companions talked, I thought, or dreamed; I was dreaming of the Fountain of the Nymphs. I awoke to see a long line of frothy soap suds—very white and nice; no classical washerwoman could desire any more perfect vestige of her art, either in ancient or modern days. Soap suds—from the bath of the Nymphs!—Somehow it jarred harshly on one's ideas. What on earth could Nymphs want with soap—and to make, what washerwomen call—such a fine lather! I looked up in the antiquary's face; I knew he had written a book on 'the antiquities of

Nismes:' I knew he was a learned and classic scholar—I wanted him to explain about these soap suds;—the very word 'suds'—came sadly across my vision of the Nymphs.

I suppose he saw my distressed, perplexed countenance, though I did not dare to speak, for he was a classical scholar and antiquary; and I did not venture to expose my ignorance. But —Oh! ye utilitarians and lovers of progress—would ye not have rejoiced over the sight that met our eyes, the sound that saluted our ears? The sturdy washerwomen of modern France were at work—there they were representing the Roman Nymphs: their thick garments tucked up and held by the joined knees; their beettes waving and clapping, while they, the modern nymphs of our progressive age, whitened the pure water of the Fountain in its passage to the canal with their soap suds!

Romance and reality are at each extremity of our stream: above, the source comes bounding forth pure and bright into a sort of tank, which once was the bath of Roman women; it is

enclosed in stone, and beside it are the ruins of the Nymphæum—the temple dedicated to the nymphs and erected by the great Augustus. To this bath was the water conducted by the stupendous acqueduct now called the Pont du Gard, very nearly 2000 years before the erection of the model baths and washing houses for our great unwashed, in England.

Notwithstanding the interest of the Roman colosseum, or amphitheatre, called at Nismes, Les Arénes, and the beauty of the elegant temple, curiously named La Maison Carrèe, I found nothing to please me so much as the recollections associated with the Fountain of Nymphs. But Nismes is a little Rome, and, whatever may be its modern attractions, those who have not visited the Eternal City, may now enjoy the grand interesting remains of its former mighty inhabitants.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE stopped at Tarascon; a little out of the direct line, I believe, to Avignon; but it was a town I wanted to visit. There is the castle of good King René of Anjou—the last king of the Troubadours—the last of the independent princes of Provence. Alas! the old castle is there, but other sounds fill it than those of rebeck and rote, the harp of the minstrel and the revelry of that by-gone time. It is now a prison. Tarasque, every one here will tell you, was the name of the Dragon that inhabited the Rhone and devoured, I really forget how many fair

young virgins, for his daily meal. He had a particular fancy for that diet. From the name of the monster comes that of the town, Tarascon.

Now the tradition is that the two women whose names and brief indistinct history are, next to that of the blessed Virgin, most known to Christendom; and deservedly so, since of them it is written :—"Jesus loved Martha and her sister"—came to the banks of the Rhone, and Martha holding the Cross before the Dragon subdued him by its power. She then unloosed her girdle, cast it round the monster's neck, and drew him an unresisting captive from his fearful haunts. The Dragon perished; the town took the name of Tarasque, or in modern French Tarascon, and is to this day under the protection of St. Martha, who is supposed to have died and been buried there. The Church dedicated to her is of the 14th century, and her shrine and tomb are more modern: there probably was a church of earlier date. A rude model of the Dragon, grotesque in its hideous

and unskilful conception, was shown to us. It used to be paraded as the Guy of Tarascon, on an annual commemoration of the victory of St. Martha; or on the festival of the patroness of the town. Its procession was attended by nearly as many fatalities as that of poor Fawkes, and consequently came to be prohibited; a consummation devoutly to be desired in the case of our own similar, but more revolting mummery.

All traditions have some truth in them—rest on some foundation; it is usually labour lost to look for the truth or try to discover the ancient foundation. How wonderful is the history of those two blessed women of whom so little has been actually recorded!—the only women of whom it is written by name that Jesus loved Martha and her sister—the sister who chose the better part, and chose contemplation rather than action; chose to learn rather than to serve. That these women came from Bethany to France would seem most improbable; yet who knows whether Martha's active spirit and Mary's deep, tender love might not have led them forth with some

of the first disciples of Him they loved, and served to teach the faith of Jesus to the heathen of Gaul? Unlikely, but not impossible, for that women accompanied the first Apostles and first teachers of Christianity we are told by St. Paul. Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as that apostle said?

And what was the terrible monster but the old Dragon—the Spirit of Evil, that ruled in the children of disobedience? At all events it is to be supposed that this tradition rests on the fact that some pious sisters named Martha and Mary did minister here either spiritually or temporally, and by their services either in time of pestilence, or time of heathendom, gave rise to the parabolic story of the dragon subdued by the cross, and enchained by the girdle of St. Martha.

Ancient authority declared Mary of Bethany to be identical with the woman who was a sinner—the Magdalene, who loved much because much had been forgiven her: the very haze that obscures the slight glimpse given to us into the

home of Lazarus—into Bethany—the "House of obedience," renders it more interesting: and thus some points of distinction in the apparently incidental notices given to us, seem to warrant the opinion that the woman who was a sinner, and yet in the touching narrative of St. Luke, anointed our Lord's feet and washed them with her tears, was *not* the same with that sister of Martha and Lazarus who broke the box of ointment and poured it on His head. The woman who was a sinner stood *behind* Him weeping—a contrite sinner, self-condemned, not daring to look on the holy face; then, as love divine stole into her soul, we see her coming gently forward to "wash His feet with her tears;" then removing the very stain of her penitential tears, she wipes them with the hairs of her head; and, emboldened by the spirit of love, the sense of pardon, at last kisses His feet—the feet that went about doing good, and anoints them with the ointment. She was "a woman of the city, which was a sinner," and did this when she knew that Jesus reclined at meat in the Pharisee's house:

she was not therefore one of the family, and though the name of the Pharisee was Simon, it would not seem he was identical with "Simon the leper," the master of the house of Bethany, for a father would scarcely say of his own child: "If this man were a prophet he would have known what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." The conduct of the weeping penitent so beautifully described by St. Luke is in some respects different from that of Mary of Bethany, as described by the other Evangelists; but all is left in dimness, that we may, like her, choose to be learners, even as the Great Teacher chooses to instruct us. In most countries, except England, the people learn much from paintings and pictures: in Russia this is most remarkably the case; if what is not true, at least what is only traditional, is thus learned, as well as what is so, this is no argument against the use of pictures and painting as teachers of scripture history. I was impressed with this opinion by meeting a working man in the little museum here. A picture

representing a frightfully skeleton form, in a nun-like garb, but with the anxious, haggard look that starvation gives to the human face—a creature, indeed, that might have come forth from Ireland in that direful season of famine—excited my curiosity, and as I saw this man also looking at it, I enquired if he knew who it represented.

"That," said he, "is the holy Madeleine."

"But how," I said, looking to another picture, "is not that the Madeleine, with the flowing hair and dishevelled dress?"

"Yes," he replied, "but that shows her as she was before she went into the Wilderness; certainly you know that when Christ convinced her of sin she went and lived for forty years in the desert. This is her picture after her penitential life."

I was sorry afterwards that I had not asked him at what time of that life she had come to Tarascon. The legend, however, gives the active Martha all the credit of the victory over the Dragon; and in it Mary is allowed to keep

the retired place which is in accordance with the part she chose for herself. In the olden time when the stage and ballet were strangely used for the instruction and amusement of the people in religious history, the ballet of Saint Martha and the Dragon was acted at the castle of King René, and he himself performed the part of the dragon, as Monsieur Tarasque. How he managed the eating up of the young maidens is a question, but that he danced in the ballet is not so.

It is remarkable in connection with this wild legend that another town in Provence claims to possess the remains, or relics, of Saint Mary Magdalene; her bones are said to rest over the altar of an old church not far from Marseilles; while those of her sister Martha are believed to be enshrined at the church dedicated to her in Tarascon.

The tradition concerning Pontius Pilate, the unhappy Roman Governor of Judea, is known to most travellers on the banks of the Rhone

by the very conspicuous rock which is always pointed out as that from which he flung himself, when, as the most unlearned peasant would tell you, he was in banishment in the tower, or castle, they call after him.

CHAPTER IX.

HAS any one ever heard of fellow-travellers who always wanted to go to the same places and to see the same sights? I never did; not even of two yoke fellows who were bound together in that way which no one can—at least should—unbind. We were three—and of the three two had been made one—yet each happened to want to go to a different place. There were three minds and three wills, and however two of them might be forced into coalition the third enjoyed

"The bliss o' independence."

Thus, when my companions took the road to Avignon, I had already imbibed so much of the spirit of travel as to pull directly the contrary way, and wanting to see all the antiquities of the ancient city of "the kingdom of Arles," that town so interesting both for its Roman memorials and christian memoirs, I actually parted with them, under protest from the gentleman, and a sort of "pray let her do what she likes" look from the lady.

The dear old one, whom I felt a longing to rejoin, was waiting for them in the ancient city of the Popes—she possibly was not aware that it had been so—and I parted from them for a couple of days, having the address of the hotel to which I was to come to join them in Avignon.

Ah! how lightly do we part from friends, giving addresses, and talking of meetings in a few days! Yet a gulf we see not may be between us for ever.

The season was getting late; in fact, except for travellers rolling on to Italy, there were few to be seen; the bye-ways were deserted; the

highways were pretty much as highways usually are, exhibitting on their dusty line some drowsy, yet grand looking English carriages, rolling along, with man and maid servant mounted aloft at the back, the usual index of "my Lord's" equipage.

The season was getting late, and if we were speaking of India we might say the rainy season had commenced. Talk they of Elephantine showers—they must be vast indeed if they exceed those we have had falling here. It was no wonder that my companions shook their heads at me when I took it into mind to go and see the old Roman burying ground at Arles; but I wanted to go; and I went.

I saw the Colisseum, where gladiators had fought in the days of the proud conquerors of Gaul, and where the martyrs of Christ had died. I saw how, under its grand old walls, the otherwise houseless poor had, with something of Irish ingenuity, erected their miserable huts: the past and present, in singular contrast. I saw the modern women of Arles, reminding one of

the matrons of old Rome; I thought of Cæsar and of Gaul; and of a greater than Cæsar, and His greater yet lowlier followers. Then I wanted to see the vast and ancient cemetery where some of the mighty conquerors of Gaul had been laid in dust; and having spent one day in exploring the antiquities of Rome, and another in assisting at a modern wedding of a young couple of the working classes in the half ancient half modern town of Arles, I set out by myself to find the Roman cemetery where the renowned inhabitants of this old city had been laid.

The rain fell, sometimes heavily, sometimes lightly; always constantly. When anything is of a uniform, determined nature, one gets used to it, and ceases to be out of humour: it is what is intermitting and vacillating that is vexatious. So I trudged on under my umbrella; relying on finding what I wanted by twisting the words Roman cemetery, as well as I could, into French. I might as well have spoken the language of old Gaul, or that in which Cæsar wrote his commentaries. I should have said, simply—'Aliscamps'

—and every child would have pointed the way. So I went on without any direction at all, for the good people only shook their heads.

I saw stone coffins built into rough modern stone walls as the boundaries of fields; and beside farm houses or a small hostelrie were to be seen cattle and horses using as a drinking trough the stone coffin that had held the body of a proud Roman; morsels of Roman antiquities put to 'uses vile,' were seen all around, so, knowing that I must be in the vicinity of the great field of the dead, for which I was seeking, I once more asked a little girl where was the Roman cemetery. Without replying in words, she looked at me enquiringly, and then fastening in her mind on the word cemetery, pointed to a rather new looking wall, enclosing a square space of ground, within a hundred yards of the spot where we were. Could that be the Roman cemetery, on which imagination had dwelt? I went over the grass to it: a new looking, unpainted door in the wall stood open; I went through it and saw some rough earth, in parts raised here and

there into small ridges, all totally bare, neither sod, tree, or flower grew within that desolate enclosure. What were the ridges? They were the size of graves, and I guessed that they were graves. But no stone told the fact: no mark of human love hung over the bare, unsightly beds —not even that most consoling of memorials over a tomb—the simple cross, the emblem of Faith, of Hope; the witness to the Life that should not pass away. The cross that beseemeth best the great, the noble and the good; the poor, the outcast, and the simple; since under its shadow all alike find refuge in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. There was no cross there, yet I knew this was not the place of sepulture of the mighty heathen to whom its preaching had been foolishness. I went in, nevertheless, for I was tired, and I stood leaning by the wall to rest.

Two men came in at the same open door, bearing between them a flat board—a stretcher, covered over with a linen sheet: they laid the board on the ground, but it could scarcely be a

human body, for it did not rise many inches above it, yet was too long to be the form of a child. I drew a little nearer. I saw the lineaments of the features, discernible through the wet and clinging linen: but so wasted away had been that poor frame, that one might suppose a mere skeleton of even of the lightest form, would be of greater bulk.

"She was sixteen years of age," said the grave digger, looking up to me from the pit, while I stood looking at the miserable pall.

"She has been a penitent," said the other,—"poor child! we are putting her into the ground now."

I shuddered. The rain fell chill and wetting; the sheeted corpse, to be laid uncoffined in its miry bed, was extended beneath it. I stood and looked down on it, and never, never did the memory of that sight and of the grave digger's words pass utterly from my memory.

"She was sixteen years of age; she has been a penitent; we are putting her in the earth;—there was the life-history; there its close. And

what had been the sin that had made her a penitent; the guilt of sixteen years of mortal life; the guilt that had made her such a penitent as left that skeleton body there stretched on the board that carried it to the pauper-criminal's grave? How was the child's innocence destroyed? Had the young heart trusted and been betrayed; and did that miserable corpse cry from the earth like the blood of Abel, against 'the murderer,' —the murderer who perchance was then rejoicing as the young man in his youth; saying the light was sweet and truly a pleasant thing it is to see the sun. And so might she have said when she walked by that soul-murderer's side; when she looked up to his face, with eyes that saw only the rose hue of love and hope and joy over all they gazed upon.

So might it have been, but she lies there, and was there but *one* penitent? If there ought to be such another, would that I could bring him here; make him stand where I stand; look upon what I see. The bare, dreary cemetery; the uncoffined dead; the drizzling rain falling on the

wasted-away skeleton; the wet linen revealing the outline of the still beautifully formed features; the grave hastily, rudely digged beside the remains of the child that had perhaps been once the desire of that murderer's eyes; the joy of a mother's heart; a father's delight.

I left the cemetery, but that scene went with me; for it is not chance merely that guides our stray steps to such a scene.

I found the burying ground of the Roman conquerors of Gaul; Aliscamps, as it is called. A strangely impressive place; one of havoc and desolation. Christians as well as heathens had been laid there, and the cross was seen as well as the urn; the first as the last; the christian emblem of hope and life; the heathen one that tells only of the ashes of the dead. It is a vast field of the long ago departed; the antiquary, moralist, and contemplative christian might there find employment for thought. Two reasons made my survey of it very much of that sort which foreigners give all the English the reputation of making on all

occasions; they tell us in all countries that we come to see sights, and do not look upon them when they are reached. My reasons were two for deserving in great degree this charge; first, the grass was very long and very wet; secondly, I had taken my place in the diligence for Avignon, and had spent too much time in the modern cemetery, and in finding out the ancient one.

We know that before railways changed our customs and even our modes of speech, the only unanswerable plea to the pressing entreaties of friends for the continuance of our stay with them, was at once to say, "I have taken my place." That would do where nothing else would. So I had taken mine, and not even the antiquities of Roman Gaul could have induced me to linger in this strange scene of desolation, even if my wet feet had not felt much more inclined to hasten back to Arles than to linger in that wild field of the long ago dead.

It was in the afternoon that I entered the diligence for Avignon, where I was to rejoin my

friends at an appointed hotel. The end of October was approaching, and the torrents of rain that had fallen for some days had by no means ceased; but I felt quite comfortable when once seated in the first place of the coupé.

The rain had increased, and darkness began to gather, when I became sensible that some unusual cause of interest or enquiry had arisen between the rest of the passengers and the conductor, who, at each descent from his elevated seat in the banquette, was eagerly questioned by them; while he appeared as eagerly to question all persons whom he encountered on the road.

The further we went the more did this sort of commotion increase; hands were projected from the windows of the interior and the rotonde, and anxious enquiries were evidently made; but I was too secluded in my "first place" to be able to hear the cause of an anxiety which, indeed, I did not at all share, simply because I thought it could not concern me. I soon began to observe that at every hamlet we passed a short halt was made; the diligence was surrounded by

seemingly anxious people, and the passengers spoke to them still more anxiously. Our conductor, a fine, active young man, had been all along impatient of delay, but he became more and more so, and each successive driver, who was taken up with each fresh set of horses, was either more and more sulky, or more boisterous and daring.

There was evidently something the matter; I had the coupé all to myself, and not caring to open the window and let the rain in, merely to hear what sounded to me as a rude jabber of foreign tongues, I acted a thoroughly English part, and drawing myself into my snug corner, listened to the splashing of water around us, and thought it was very well to feel dry when so many must be wet. I saw, nevertheless, that as darkness deepened my fellow passengers dropped rapidly away; luggage, intended to have seen Avignon, was hastily made to descend, amid the entreaties of passengers, the vociferations of helpers and lookers-on, and the indignant exclamations of the excited conductor, who evi-

dently felt each moment of lost time to be more and more harrassing.

At last he would no longer be delayed by stopping to take down luggage; he let out his passengers, only crying to them that they would find their goods at a future time in Avignon, and scarcely waiting till their feet touched the ground, shouted out, "allez!" and on we dashed. The last we thus set down was a Frenchwoman, who had long seemed resolved to share whatever fate might lie before boxes, which of course contained the robe that few Frenchwomen under any circumstances can forget; but she too finally descended at a poor house by the way side, saying something of the necessity of trying to save herself, but affirming in touching, though vehement tones, that her trunks were doomed to perish, and without resource. The conductor flinging out his hands in answer, was springing up to his seat in the banquette, muttering that he then must perish with them, when a sudden thought must have struck him that something was still in the coupé. He opened the door, looked in, and said with emphasis:

"Will *you* keep your place?"

"Without doubt; I am going to Avignon."

"Brave woman! *allons! vive les Anglaises!*" he cried, clapped the door, and on we went.

I knew I got praise, and I liked it, especially from a Frenchman; but how I came to deserve it I knew not.

The darkness grew intense; deep silence succeeded the recent commotion; the conductor only spoke at intervals to the driver, and then it was in that deep-toned voice which always indicates anxiety. I felt, rather than heard, that he exhorted him to speed; the driver's voice in reply seemed buried in his throat. The sound of water was on every side. Surely, I began to think, it is not merely rain.

Our road lay along the course of the Rhone—the arrowy Rhone, so swift and strong; but though I knew that, the idea of danger from it had never crossed my mind: even still I imputed the urgent haste, the anxious voices, or still more anxious silence of the men to the fact that the heavy rain had made them wet and out of temper. In critical moments, or circumstances

of much anxiety, speech is always repressed; the loud and eager voices of the two men were hushed, and not a human or living thing appeared to be on the road. A low remark, or brief exhortation to speed, was all that was heard from the active conductor, while our lost driver had ceased to utter the cries, expostulations, and abusive epithets which a French postilion employs in aid of the terrible whip by whose sound only the horses are driven.

Thus, in silence and darkness I rested content, till a sudden dash of water over the windows of the diligence, convinced me that *rain* was not the cause of fear. I rose to the front windows and looked out. To my astonishment all that was visible of the six white horses, harnessed three and three abreast, was just the top of their broad flat backs, rising above the water their feet dispersed; even their short tails, wound up in straw, were submersed.

We are in a river, said I to myself, but not in *the* river, undoubtedly. But what can be done?

the conductor will not drown himself or me if he can help it.

I drew back to my corner, supposing we were crossing some part of the river, but never imagining that the river was crossing us. The men kept unbroken silence; nothing save the splashing and dashing of water was heard; it went over the top of the diligence, and streamed down again over my windows, so that I could not see the least bit through them. I felt the men were not asleep, and I began to feel that they were deeply anxious; I tried if it were possible to open the window and ask what was the matter, but I soon saw it was wiser to let the water stay outside than to admit it in. I rested in the same silence: but a slight ascent in our road became perceptible: as soon as this was the case the voice of the conductor burst out, he called, he cried, he implored, scolded, promised, urged the apparently sulky driver; he impelled the horses himself, he seemed ready to jump down and help them to draw; the driver too awoke, his terribly resounding whip went like a succession of pistol

shots; his voice helped it, loading the poor terrified animals with all sorts of tenderly abusive epithets; calling them hogs, robbers, little rascals, demons, cowards, interspersed with encouragements and formidable threats. The conductor was standing up, leaning over and looking round.

On we went, up hill, evidently rising out of water, and driving as for life or death. When all at once—splash!—down we went—or else up came the water, I knew not which. I thought we had plunged into the river at last. It was a startling moment and I uttered a little scream, though no one heard it. The horses were plunging, even their white backs no longer appeared like a line of light when I tried to see; and I heard an exclamation from the conductor that went to say something that sounded certainly very like a declaration that we were lost. It was almost time to get afraid, and I had just formed the determination to be so, and to remain quiet no longer, when a shout burst over my head; a cry not of terror but joy; it was echoed by the driver,

the foam of water was lashing over us, but we were ascending. With great difficulty I got a bit of a window opened, and called up to the banquette.

"What is the matter, conductor?"

"We are saved! we are saved! be quiet now; shut the window," he said, and I saw the lights of Avignon dimly gleaming through the mist.

We were closer to it than even he had known. The whip cracked, the horses flew up the rising ground, the water lashing over them; at full gallop we dashed through the old gate of the city, no revenue officers, or customary formalities stopped us; but straight on we drove, into a large coach house, or covered shed of some sort.

Here our conductor was instantly surrounded by eager enquirers; anxious faces circled us in a crowd; breaking through all he ran to the coupé, took me out like a bundle of goods, and put me down above my knees in water; then finding I could not, or would not, wade on in it, he snatched me up in his arms, like a child, ran

across a street, kicked open the door of a house, and dropped me into the passage within it.

A woman with a white face, and long thin candle, in an equally long, thin candlestick in her hand, came to it, and would evidently have kept it closed if she could. By the light of that candle I saw what the good conductor's exertions or anxieties must have been; he was a strong, active, ruddy-complexioned young man, but now he was singularly pale, and large drops of what seemed to be cold perspiration, were falling from his forehead. His chest heaved as if from long pent up breath. He said a hasty word to the staring woman. I only heard him utter "brave woman" as he pushed me in, and before she could recover sufficiently from her surprise to speak, he had disappeared.

I saw her look after him quite aghast, and turning my head to the street, beheld a crowd of persons flocking to her open door like musquitoes attracted by the candle. Her face, one might think was enough to drive them back, but on the contrary, all her energy was required to get

the door closed. She then waved the candle for me to follow her, and went upstairs, ushering me into a dirty, most repulsive, and very cold chamber.

"Do you not think I had better go to another house?" I said.

"On the contrary, I think you had better stay where you are. You ask me what I think, I tell you what I *think*, but not what I *wish*," she replied.

And lighting a much shorter bit of candle, left it with me, and went away.

I was wet from head to foot; cold, and in want of a warm drink, and something to eat; a fire too, was an absolute necessity. I went out on the staircase, and saw her walking about below it, as if attempting to barricade her house. I called down, and requested a fire. The candle waved a negative, but in addition to its expressiveness, she added:

"Fire! no," and went on.

I watched, shivering, till she repassed.

"Can I have supper?"

"Supper! Are the people mad?" and with a doubly negative wave, came back with chilling emphasis, "No, no! a thousand times, no!"

I crept back to my cold, black looking chamber. The rain had for some time ceased to fall, and never having conceived the notion of an inundation, I was totally at a loss to account for all these very unusual symptoms. At last the idea of a revolution occurred to me. "Yes," I said to myself, "there is certainly a revolution—and at Avignon! with all its hideous, bloody memories!" I shivered. But then I was cold as well as frightened, and the cold I hoped to get rid of, if I could not the fear. I therefore took off my wet clothes and went to bed. But to sleep was impossible. The house door was assailed by knocks, and loud calls outside; it forced my poor hostess to appear at a window, from whence she pathetically implored the crowd of persons below to consult their own safety and begone from a house that was certain to be destroyed. This was an additional solace to me. The tumult in the street kept me awake all night.

After such a night, one feels less disposed to rise in the morning. But day had only broke when my hostess burst into my chamber. The candle was not in her hand, but her face looked even worse.

"Mademoiselle, have the goodness to rise instantly."

"Why?"

"You must leave the house this moment."

"Why?"

"Because if you don't go this moment you will never go at all; no, never! You will be lost. We shall all be lost. We have no provisions. We must shut up all below, and take refuge at the top of the house. We cannot maintain you."

"What is the matter?" I cried, jumping up with more alacrity than I had believed myself capable of. "Is it a revolu—?"

"What is the matter? Are you ignorant, then, and you travelled last night? Go to the door, and you will see."

I dressed quickly, and went to the door. The

house was a corner one, and the street was rather more elevated than those adjoining it. The day was bright, and all was still. My hostess saw me looking complacently from her door. She caught my hand, and drew me to the corner of the house, making me look down the next street, and there, to my surprise, I saw an advancing tide, the water flowing on in a full stream, and people in boats saving some of their goods from the houses.

"Are not the waters come?" she cried, in a tone of bitter triumph. "Now then, save yourself; begone—leave us! We are lost!"

"Where are the hotels?" I asked?

"In the waters," was the answer, and it was a true one, for all the good hotels being near the river, were the soonest submerged. Many English travellers on their way to Italy were made prisoners in them. My friends—where were they? To seek them was impossible.

"What shall I do?" I said, much more humbly than I had yet spoken.

"Do what you can, only leave us. Be quick!

—go!—leave us!" and with a wave, as if of an imaginary thin candle, she disappeared, and I never saw her again.

As I looked round, in a sense of forlornness, I saw a young countryman, in a clean bright blue blouse, with a countenance that might be said to carry a good letter of introduction in its frank, honest, kind expression. He was talking with an equally pleasant-looking young woman. I went over to him, explained my position, said I was a stranger, as my speech testified, that I had narrowly escaped being in the water the night before, and now wanted to find a lodging where I could be kept out of it.

The young woman evidently seconded my appeal, and after a few moments consultation between themselves, he turned to me, took off his casquette, and asked if I would allow him the honour of conducting me to some houses in the high part of the city where I might obtain lodgings. I gladly allowed him the honour. I had no luggage, no bag even to remove, and having my bonnet in my hand, and my still wet

clothes on, I set off with my new friend. My hostess, indeed, had put my bonnet in my hand, and in her retreat closed up her house; she sought for no pay, and I believe my nightly refuge was only accorded to me for the conductor's sake.

Guided by the polite Frenchman, I soon ascended above the advancing waters. The streets then were dry, the air quite warm, but the aspect of the sky was curious; it was not dark, nor grey, nor what we call lowering; but it seemed so low, that, while blue and bright, one might think to take hold of it from the tops of the houses.

We applied in vain at several lodging houses; they would not take lodgers now, because provisions might fail; they had no firing, or made some such excuse. At last, my friendly guide managed to get me a large clean chamber at the very top of a very high house, in the highest part of Avignon; just near the foot of the vast rocky hill on which stands the citadel. Here, leaving me with a tidy old woman, he took an

order for my luggage, with which in implicit faith I entrusted him, and went off to seek out my late conductor, who had all my worldly possessions.

I had eaten nothing from my breakfast the day before; certainly a French breakfast is a nice, as well as substantial meal. But after twenty-four hours' fast the prospect of its repetition was particularly pleasing. My three wants now were fire, breakfast and change of raiment. For the last I must bide the time of another; for the two former I proceeded to ask my new housekeeper.

Breakfast and fire! The utter astonishment in which my old hostess repeated the words almost alarmed me. What? Breakfast and fire, when all the world were in the waters—when they had no provisions, no firing, and never might be able to get any; did I imagine she was to give me breakfast and fire because she let me her chamber?

I saw I must moderate my demands, and I took another tone.

Well, just for this time, she could give me a little coffee, and sugar, and boiled milk, and bread and butter, and—yes, if there was nothing else—some eggs would do, I could then make an English breakfast. And she would also give me a fire.

She held up her hands, lifted her shoulders, eyed me as if thinking whether I were quite in my right mind; and, for a further exposition of what I was to expect from her, went over to a small closet, opened the door, and showed me it was very neat and quite empty; she said I might keep my wood there; then to another, and exhibited cups and crockery ware all in excellent order; then on to a really charming little scullery, where pots and pans were beautifully arranged, and where she told me I must wash up all the things I used.

I replied that all the domestic arrangements, for housekeping in a single chamber, were truly admirable and pertect; but my only embarrassment was that I had nothing to begin my housekeeping with, and I was really desirous to use

some of the cups and plates and pans before I washed them.

"Do so," she answered with a nod, and was moving off.

"But I have nothing to use them with."

"That is your affair."

I began a pathetic tale; told how narrowly I had escaped from being lost in the waters of the Rhone; how I was wet, cold, and hungry, and how much I felt the necessity of hot *café au lait* to resuscitate me.

"It was truly dreadful," she remarked, but her eyes spoke of a melting mood; truly dreadful; but if people would travel, what else could they expect? The English lived on the high roads; they spent their money and lost their lives as well as their time—but if they chose to die on the high roads that was not her affair.

"Ah! but the French were so kind!—I might have been left knee deep in the waters all night if a good Frenchman had not carried me in his arms into a house."

"Well—yes; it was necessary to be good to

foreigners—that was well understood," the mollified old dame began to mutter.

"Yes, and then, see now, Madame, it was this very reputation of the French that made me so confident that you would give me coffee, and such things, till I can get them for myself."

"Well, if you will, for this once."

"Yes, and you will make me a fire?"

"Make a fire! heard one ever the like? Where think you we shall find the time, and all the world in the waters?

"At least you will give me wood?"

"Well, yes, it is necessary to be kind to strangers—yes, for this once; but you must make your fire.

"Very well, that I will do."

I was delighted to find that politeness and good-humour really do succeed with the French. My breakfast soon appeared: while I was enjoying it in came my hostess, dragging a tall bundle of brushwood, followed by a man loaded with great logs. This was all stored in the closet, and the good dame told me I might make my

fire, but exhorted me to be saving of the wood, as she could not, on any terms, get me more; all the wood, as well as coffee, milk, eggs, bread, meat, butter, and every thing else one wanted, being, with all the world, in the waters.

"Now then, make your fire," said she, putting a box of matches on the table; "but if you take my counsel you will not waste the matches, since we can get go more; positively no more."

"Are the matches in the waters, also?"

"Undoubtedly. Now you speak to me no more; absolutely no more! I have done my duty. It is necessary to be good to strangers. Now light your fire, and warm some water, and wash up those cups, and mind you never speak one word to me any more."

She went away, dear old thing, satisfied that she had done her duty by a stranger; and I set to work to obey her directions. A wood fire, I thought, would be easily and cleanly made. I began to make it most cheerfully; but my self-complacency was soon checked. I began to find

it was not so easy to make a wood fire when you did not know how to set about it. I consumed a vast quantity of small wood, but could not get the great logs to ignite. After repeated efforts I left the room, and contrived to allure my hostess into it.

"See now, Madame," I said, pointing to the hearth, "I waste the wood and the matches, and do not make the fire."

It was needless to point to it. The woful havoc on the hearth riveted her gaze at once. In a sort of indignant wonder she stood staring at it.

"Is it then to be believed?" she said, "can you indeed be so ignorant?"

"I fear I am so."

"That you do not know how to make a fire?"

"It seems not—the large wood will not light."

"What unheard of ignorance! Is it in that manner you lay the wood? It is my belief you know nothing; no, you know nothing at all."

"Ah! the French are so clever! It is not in our education to learn to make wood fires."

"And yet you travel; you will see all: the English, they say, love to instruct themselves: they spend time and money, and lose their lives on the high roads, because they will instruct themselves. Yet you do not know how to make a fire!"

"But I should like to learn. See now, Madame, we have not the advantage of wood fires in England; only dirty coals; and not made, as in France, on an open hearth like this. Ah! if you come to England one day, I should like to make you a coal fire in our grates, just as you would like to shew me how you make a wood one."

"Well, if you wish to learn;—it is necessary to instruct strangers. Look then, once for all, and be ignorant no more, for when all the world is in the waters—"

So she began to work in her own way; quite a different one from mine, building up the logs in an artistic manner, on scientific principles;

and very soon had made me a charming fire, while giving me a lesson how to make it.

Somehow I never did learn that lesson practically, and each day it was repeated, during the whole fortnight that I was a water-bound prisoner in the good dame's house; and each day I had my fire lighted while she was teaching me how to do it, and marvelling at my incurable ignorance.

Just as I had settled myself to the enjoyment of its blaze, and was witnessing the process of evaporation taking place from my garments, in walked my honest-looking Frenchman, as honest as his looks, with my travelling bags in his hands, and followed by a youth, with my portmanteau on his shoulder. He congratulated me with real friendliness on being so comfortable; assured me I might rest in peace, for there was no danger; notwithstanding all the old woman had said the waters would not reach me in my elevated lodging: and of that he was glad, for the conductor had told him I was a woman of courage; and my life was worth saving; though he had

been much afraid it might be lost in the flood the night before. I felt that as men became heroes often by accident, women may appear to be heroines from ignorance.

"But what has caused this flood," I asked the intelligent young man; "can the late rains, heavy though they were, so affect the great river Rhone?"

"It is not our river," he replied, "that is to blame, but that very ill-natured one, the Durance. In autumn, when there is much rain, it becomes truly wicked; the snows that melt in the mountains, up there in Dauphiné, swell the torrents that pour into it, and then it meets our river, that is good enough by itself, but when it is charged with these bad neighbours, you see, Mademoiselle, it grows very mischievous. The poor people down below there will lose all."

"You, I hope, are not in danger of loss?" I said, at the same time presenting him with some money as compensation for his trouble.

"Pardon me," he said, with a bow, "I am not in the waters, and can take nothing; I am happy

to have served you. The boy who carried the trunk will be glad of a trifle."

I thanked him gratefully; he went away, bowing and smiling, and saying he had only done as he would wish one of my country people to do by him if he were a stranger in England. I sighed as he closed the door, thinking if it were certain that an English countryman would take all this trouble for a foreigner, without any notion of reward. Then I opened my portmanteau, which was only strapped down without any lock. All was right, and, more surprising, dry within; and I soon luxuriated in my change of circumstances, to such a degree, as, with too common selfishness, to forget for a time that all the world was in the waters.

I got coffee a second time, and an egg for my dinner; I feared to ask for more, for even that was obtained with a good deal of manœuvering. However, the very next day I reconnoitered from my window the position of the house, and satisfied myself that there could be no obstacle to my mounting the vast hill of rock on which

my window looked. Accordingly, notwithstanding the warning of my hostess, I left the house, and soon mounted the heights. The view from thence was curious.

Avignon, the city of the Popes, was called in old time, before so many of its churches were destroyed, La Ville sonnante—the ringing town, from the number of its bells; but now even the diminished number of its bells were silent, for the churches were inundated, most of them full of water to the pulpit tops; the houses in the lower part of the town were almost buried. The deepest silence prevailed; it was like Venice, if the voices of people, and the sounds of music were unheard in that water-city; for the poor people who went about the inundated streets in boats were quite unlike the gondoliers and the grand canal passengers.

As far as one could well see around the town, the mighty Rhone appeared to be the conqueror and possessor of the land that had lately held it in; the tops of the trees on its islets were covered; only some of the upper parts of taller trees on

its banks were visible above the flood, and looked like water marks to shew its extent, and the spires and turrets of the old papal city alone towered up haughtily over the waste of waters. All traffic and travelling were suspended, business was at a stand; only a few shops in high situations were open, and the stillness of this large, busy, and repeatedly noisy city was almost oppressive. It was useless to ask for any one or anything; the post-office was in the waters; letters were in the waters; all the world, in the brief sum total of French speech, was in the waters. But my walk yielded me more than a curious view. As I descended the hill I managed to take a wrong turn, and found myself in a nice and pretty little market. Never was market more grateful to my eyes. The people who had goods to sell there looked very gloomy, and those who came to buy looked very cheerful. The reason, they told me, was that the latter got better bargains than they should get when provisions ought to be so dear; and the former having come from the country with their provi-

sions, could not get them sold because customers could not get to them. Here I got the most delicious lamb, and the sweetest autumn violets. The lamb was so delicate one could not think it was what is vulgarly called butcher's meat; neither was it so rich as game. I believe its delicacy arose from the creatures being fed on the Cevennes mountains, which are covered with aromatic herbage

Flowers are a general article of merchandise in the French markets; and I acted the part of the native housewife, who will usually spare a penny for the bunch of flowers which is to lie over her little market basket. I went out every day to this market, whether it rained or not, and brought back lamb and violets: the pleasure of buying made one feel it a necessity to eat. And in addition to these two daily duties, I had to clean my own chamber, make my bed, cook my dinner, wash up my plates and cups; in short, do all but light my own fire. I really rather liked housekeeping on my own account, in a single chamber, with a scullery at the rear.

I wanted to know how my friends got on in their hotel, but I did not envy them—(certainly they had more room and more attendance)—but I doubt if they had lamb and violets.

Part of the time rain fell in torrents; at others the skies distilled a soft, quiet, unremitting shower, while looking as blue and pleasant as if they were innocent of such pertinacity; at all times the air was warm, though damp. The only annoyance I had to endure was from the mosquitoes, or large gnats, to whom this state of atmosphere was a perfect bliss. In the evenings the heat, from having had fire to dress my dinner and make my tea, would force me to open the window; but if I did so after the candles had been lighted, or while my logs were blazing, I had dearly to rue the want of thought. These tormentors would then flock into the room in crowds, attracted by the light, blowing their annoying, irritating, terrifying trumpets more lustily than such atoms of things could be supposed to do; hard it is to believe such a startling blast is made by their invisible wings—and with

their long thread-like legs hanging down, they would start one from all occupation if awake, or give one cause to lament a passive condition if asleep, when a fearfully disfigured visage looked out from the glass in the morning. The bites swelled to such a size, and were so painful, that to me these mosquito bites were by far the worst part of the inundation of the Rhone and Durance.

At the end of a fortnight the rain, which for some previous days had been light, but pretty constant, quite ceased; the sun came out of its thin shroud, and a breeze sprang up. My old hostess came to give me her daily lesson in fire making, and announced that soon all the world would be out of the waters; it seemed to have been my fate ever to seek my friends *in* them.

I went out on the hill—my mount Ararat: and from up there I saw that the waters of the flood were retiring; and in a day or two afterwards the dry ground was seen—no, dry it was not; but the wet ground was seen, and even that was a comfort. The feel of the atmosphere was

most remarkable ; I can only compare it to a hot vapour bath—if you can fancy the sun shining bright and warm through a vapour bath. The sky was blue and bright; the air quite still, and both hot and moist—wetting, while it warmed you. The aspect all around was deplorable; worse now when the mud and dirt were visible than when all was under water. Misery was now apparent that had been covered hitherto. Ruined dwellings, and most wofully disfigured shops: what had been called "goods," appearing to be anything but "goods" now; people knee-deep in mud or water trying to effect entrances to what had lately been their homes. When I saw the melancholy looks of many, my heart reproached me for selfish contentment and joyousness.

The next day they told me the hotels were out of the water: I must not then lose time or the sojourners in them would be out also; the compulsory arks would be left without their doves. I descended into the city: the people were at work, clearing out mud and water from

the houses and churches. I saw a pulpit quite full of mud. A melancholy looking English carriage, known for such by the "lady's maid" being seated behind it, whereas a bonne, or femme-de-chambre would have been with her lady within, passed languidly out from an hotel; moving off with the subdued air of a besieged party allowed to retire.

My companions in travel were still at theirs; I waded in through soft slimy mud to astonish them with my appearance. My housekeeping on the hill had agreed with me—in fact I believe they had had neither lamb nor violets. They did not think I was a spectre; but they stared dreadfully, and finally declared they had been horribly uneasy for my fate. I assured them I had been equally so for theirs, as I knew their hotel was in the waters, whereas my lodging had been much nearer the skies. And I related my adventures forthwith.

"One thing is certain," said Mr. Talbot, looking at me with something of the earnestness of a judge about to warn a juvenile offender of

the probable fate that lies before him if he persists in iniquity; "one thing is certain you are not born to be drowned."

The dear old lady was almost overjoyed to behold me again in life.

When I saw her the next day after she had heard the recital I had given the others, she put her hands on my shoulders, and looking enquiringly into my face, said:

"You don't suppose I believe in such superstitious nonsense?"

"What nonsense?"

"Why he says you are a sort of water-witch; he calls you an Undine, and says you raised the inundation to keep us here, and that you might amuse yourself up there on the hill."

"O dear!—it might be very pleasant to do that if one didn't drown people, and ruin so many—"

"Yes, my dear, it is all his nonsense. That comes of living in Germany, and believing in all their witches and things."

I returned to my single chamber to take leave

of my good old dame. I assured her if ever she came to see me in England it would give me pleasure to teach her how to make one of our fires.

"And that, Mademoiselle," she replied, "I think you may well do, though I thank you for the complaisance: for it is my belief you would never have learned any thing—no, not the least thing, if you had not been with me when all the world was in the water."

And so my teaching time ended when the Rhone and Durance withdrew their amalgamated flood within its proper limit.

I have written lightly, because I write down simply what passed, and wrote as I felt while it was passing; yet, gravely reviewing the time, methinks one ought also to record an expression of thankfulness to that Good Providence "who saveth our lives from destruction, and crowneth us with loving kindness and tender mercies."

CHAPTER X.

FROM Avignon where on earth have we come to? Why all the way to Grenoble, because the dear old lady wanted to see a bed chamber Napoleon had slept in. Did he sleep? that is a question. Here he passed the night on his return from Elba —Elba, where my own near and dear, but long-departed relative had taken him. Ah! I never told that to my poor French master, he never could have been so good to me if he had known it!

Now we are in Napoleon's room, and the chamber maid shews us a balcony, and says the

Emperor stood there to see the young men of Grenoble bringing him on their shoulders, the gates of the town instead of its keys. So truly French. The chambermaid, a young woman, whose remembrances must be traditional, having shewn us all, adds, with what may be deemed a sort of circular sigh, being always the same, to whomsoever directed:

"Ah! I could forgive anything but sending him to die among the English, his enemies, who hated him."

Now what will our good old lady do? Come with us, I say; we will not take you quite to the convent. You shall not give the least encouragement to their system: I don't like it myself. I like that little song: "I won't be a nun."

"That's right," said the dear old lady, when my argument ended, as many arguments do, with an assertion of what I liked myself; "that's quite right; and I am very glad, my dear, that you have not got any of those foolish notions in your head. And I assure you that if I did not believe that as enlightened Protestants, we are bound to

set an example, and not countenance such places, I should like well enough to go with you, just to see what they are doing up there."

"That you could not do, dear madam," said Mr. Talbot, "for no woman is admitted."

"No woman admitted!" repeated the dear soul in a long-drawn intonation, "how horrible! how unscriptural!"

"Ah!" said her provoking relative, "St. Bruno founded his rule for the exclusion of womankind, entirely on scriptural ground, and gives scriptural warrant and warnings for its necessity. Listen to his words. 'We permit not women ever to enter our cloister, for we know that neither sage nor prophet, not even the first model of God's hands, has been able to escape from the blandishments and deceits of women. Let us recollect Solomon, David, Samson, Lot, and others who took wives, or those whom they chose, even Adam himself; and be persuaded that 'men cannot conceal fire in their bosoms without scorching their clothes, nor walk on live coals without burning their feet.'"

The old lady was silent for some time; and then, looking over at the wickedly smiling Agnes, she uttered her thoughts aloud, and said:

"Well, really, that is a great compliment to us."

So in a more complacent mood towards Saint Bruno and his monks, she came with us on our road to his great monastery.

It was a beautiful road; the Valley of Isère is all charming, but the part of it called the vale of Gèsivandan is truly exquisite. I had no adequate idea of the varied beauty of Dauphiné; wildness and softness, grandeur and fertility; luxuriant foliage, sterile rocks, abundant produce, corn, vines, and such enormous hemp, exceeding in height that which I had thought so enormously long at Tours; I believe 14 or 15 feet long in stalk. The vines—not, of course, productive like those of the cropped, shrub-like ones of the vineyards, wreathing the orchard trees, as we saw them in the sweet Val d'Azun. But though fairer to see, the grapes they yield are not like those of the Cote Roti, or a Hermitage, where

the vineyards are formal things, giving one notions of trade and commerce; but whoever has stopped at the little town of St. Peray, and as our dear lady observed, "just to have it to say," asked for a flask of its real, home-made wine, would not be disposed, I think, to feel discontent with that culture of the vine that appears to disappoint and dissatisfy so many of our travellers. The wreathing vines are the graceful ladies of their tribe; the cropped, currant-bush-like ones, are the daughters of the people, the work-producing order.

What must Napoleon have felt, when on his escape from little Elba he came to Grenoble, and beheld the fair land he had so lately lost, and now sought to re-win? From its fortress, called the Bastile, he could see over this valley, and far away, even to the great white heap which shut up the view, and which is called Mont Blanc—far away he could see over mountain, and vale, and winding river, and below at his feet Grenoble, with its sturdy ramparts, and the gate which its brave youths carried to him, as Sam-

son bore away the gates of Gaza, when the loyal governor refused the key.

What thoughts must have filled that capacious mind!

And so, amid scenery at once fair, cultivated, rich, and yet displaying all the wild grace of nature without which a landscape merely reminds you of the work of man, we came on to Voreppe: and there down came a fall of snow, quite unexpectedly, for the sun had shone on our pleasant road. We went to St Laurent du Pont, a place which I hear, has since been burned down, and there we spent a night in a house which our old lady called a carrier's inn. There were certainly a good many waggons and carts around it. Here we were to consult and arrange for our ascension to La Grande Chartreuse.

I left the consultation and arrangement to wiser heads, and after looking about at the snowy scenery went to bed to dream of things I did not know how to talk about. Agnes had seemed a little discomfited at the snow, but as her husband declared it only gave the excursion an additional

piquancy, and that he should enjoy it all the more, she offered no opposition.

The sun shone bright in the morning, even warmly, but the snow lay, not deep, but bright. Judge of my dismay, when I was received by our old lady with a smiling countenance, and the words:

"So, my dear, there is an end of your visit to that horrid convent. I declare I think it is quite a providence."

I gasped: I could not speak even the word: "Why?"

"Agnes is ill; her husband has just got her some of my own real native tea, and an egg. She has got a bad sick headache."

"But he will come, will he not?"

"O! my dear—single ladies, to be sure, don't understand—but still you know married men never like to go anywhere without their wives."

"O! I didn't know. Well, I must go alone."

A shriek followed.

"Alone!—and be drowned again! or get your limbs broken in the snow, like Don Quixote; or be shut up in a convent for life! My dear child, are you mad?"

I could not answer the last question satisfactorily; so it was left open to be determined by future evidence; and I, stealing away, bespoke my own mule, and with a fine, steady looking man, not in the least like a silent Jacques, actually set out for the Desert of St Bruno.

Byron—whose spirit, with all his strange affectation of the reverse, really never grew old, and was not really old when he said his heart was as grey as his head—Byron has asked; "Once more, who would not be a boy?" Perhaps no one who is not, or has not been a very happy girl. Who would not be a girl?—I ask now, as I recall that snow shiny morning when, seated on a large dark, stately mule, I set off, not perhaps as proud as a peacock, but with something akin to pride in my heart, as the animal I sat on, and the object of my journey, inspired me with sundry historic remembrances

that made me feel as if I belonged to the time of priestly magnificence, when a mule's back bore its own weight in gold and jewels.

Sweet, blessed youth! How does the longing arms of age stretch out to thee! Come back!—come back! sweet spirit of young years—come back, fair spirit of hope and love, with eyes that saw beauty in all things and good in all beings.

Not here wilt thou return. The world has done its work; its iron chain rests on thee. Yet surely shall we meet again.

We soon entered a most delightful gorge in the rocky mountains, so thickly covered with trees that the branches formed an arcade over us. Leafy were they? I am not sure; I think not; but the trees were covered in snow, and from the branches hung down slight icicles sparkling like diamonds, but not the least dissolving in the bright cold sun. Here the fact was clear that snow and frost had set in in these higher regions before we had been aware of their approach. The tracery of the latter was yet light, airy, and graceful; the feathery snow was just sufficiently

congealed to keep it steady, and we had a roof of fret-work which not the richest cloister of the finest Gothic architecture could produce. My mule's feet sometimes sunk pretty deep in holes filled with snow, and once or twice he went up to his fore-knees in it.

My guide was profoundly silent. I might have thought him a monk of Chartreuse in disguise. I did think of sundry books written, and stranger still, published in London, about creatures being carried off to convents and kept there *nolens volens*, without any profit resulting to their spiritual captors; but as my guide appeared absolutely indifferent as to the chance of my ending my life by a roll down the precipice, or, as our dear lady said, breaking my bones like Don Quixote in the snow, I made up my mind to the belief that I was not of consequence enough to be seized by any spiritual contrabandists. And so I let my suspiciously silent guide indulge his rule while I indulged mine.

What facilities for observance! For a few minutes I descended from my stately-pacing

mule, and rested at the Forges; but if a Forge had been here,

> "The fire upon its hearth is dead,
> The smoke in air has vanished."

I sat on a bit of rock, and indulged that sight. The frost had not enchained the river, that, ran low in its rock-girdled prison in one part of our progress, and here bursts forth through a narrow opening between two walls of rock, pouring out in wild rejoicing, filling with deep resounding melody the lonely place. Here is the entrance to the ancient enclosure of Saint Bruno.

"There are certain scenes," says our own sweet poet Gray, "that would awe an atheist into belief. St. Bruno was a man of no common genius to choose such a place for his retirement."

Could the atheist sit here, and be an atheist still? Not in his secret heart, if he owned its language.

There is a vast difference in this Alpine sce-

nery from that of the Pyrenees. One sees and feels the difference, but it is not easily explained; there are rocks, mountains, wood, and water in both, but the nature and combinations of both are unlike; and then the atmosphere of gloom, silence, awe, was quite unlike anything seen in the more southern mountains.

Passing the now useless gateway, which, in times when the Monastery of St. Bruno was rich and fortified, served for its outpost and was defended by soldiers, we left the picturesque spot in which true artists delight—the dark precipices, ruined and blackened forges, foaming, dashing torrent, bridge and ancient gateway, a very feast for the pencil,—and entered the Desert, which, though the monks have reclaimed much by their labours, has not yet been made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

In summer methinks the foliage of this "awsome scene," as the Scotch might call it, would redeem its savage character. But now, when the snow lay over it, words could never describe its heart-impressing aspect. Perhaps—it seems

silly to say so—yet perhaps no English traveller ever has visited the Grande Chartreuse at such a time. Rocks of vast height hung the fresh snow almost over our heads; so high they were that they looked over the tree tops as well as over our heads, for in many places these rocks project almost over the narrow road—a road cut by monkish labour right through the solid mass; and then the branches of the trees between them and us hung a glittering, fairy-like canopy, white and clear even in gloom, sparkling where the sunlight fell over our strange path, which was of pure and still untrodden snow. The roar of the torrent in the deep precipice beside us, was the only sound to be heard, and it was sometimes a hollow moan, that seemed like that of a spirit in pain.

Some one has told me that since that time a road has been made, along which wheeled carriages can pass to the Grande Chartreuse, and that the wood cut in its forests is now transported by carts, instead of being slung on mules, as it was when I rode up there. Then troops

of mules came quickly down to meet me, with long pieces of wood most curiously and ingeniously slung by ropes, fastened precisely in the centre, on their backs. I cannot describe the scientific principle on which the nature-taught wood cutters acted, but the wood being equally poised and in constant movement very nearly shoved my mule and myself into the precipice that was on our own side of the road. The spirit of silence reigned there supreme, for neither my guide, nor the mule drivers, nor myself uttered a word; the former only put out his hand and gave the wood planks as they swept a half circle another semi-revolution towards the rocks, and from myself and the precipice.

Alas! how all the world must be changed, if, even in respect to the Desert of St. Bruno we must now speak in the past tense! A carriage road to Mount Vesuvius never appeared to me so unlikely as one to the Grande Chartreuse. But that old magnificent pass yet remains, and whoever drives by the new carriage road, will be

like those who for the first time approach Venice by the railroad.

We reached the sugar loaf—a high limestone rock—which forms, as it were a lintel to the gateway, that was once the inner and most rigid enclosure of the monks. Here, in some not so very long passed days, I must have stopped, and there, if I chose, remained.

"One morn a Peri at the gate
Of Eden sat disconsolate,"

and the monks of St. Bruno would have been as rigid in excluding a daughter of Eve from their paradise; but alas! they have fallen on evil times, and now they are glad—my pen blushes to write the words—glad to get a few francs from any of those wandering daughters who like to pay them a visit, and eat their dried fruits and cheese.

But in the good old times, when the monastery was rich and rigid, the soldiers who guarded this gate would soon have put an end to any of womankind who attempted to storm the monastery, or

even the precincts of the monastery of St. Bruno. Of him, judging from the words of his own rule, as before quoted, it certainly could not be said, as the Irish poet said of St Kelvin:

> "Ah! the good saint little knew
> What that wily sex could do;"

but though he seems to have known that right well, he yet little knew what the changes of time, and the force of poverty could do. His monks have built a woman's house closely adjoining their convent, where ladies may go and eat, and drink, and sleep too, if they like to pay for their entertainment. Contented with little, indeed, are the poor monks; and to go there for the sake of giving, is in itself a pleasure.

The ascent just before reaching this second gateway, was rather difficult in the snow; but after some rides in the Pyrenees one does not mind it much; a bridge also led us to the opposite bank of the torrent, and here we had a view for the first time; the gorge opened, and from

the elevation we had gained we looked over the descent with forests outstretched, sloping away to a great distance.

It was fair sailing after that, and in a short time a pile of buildings appeared with mountains still above them, and enclosed in mountain woods. Here, nearly 5,000 feet—the height of Snowdon, I think—above the sea, is the convent La Grande Chartreuse.

I was received by one of the Fathers, a white-robed old monk with head that need not be shaven, for it was purely bald by nature; it was also laid on one side; he was very little, and his cheeks were very pink. With his head resting on one shoulder, he received me with quite an emotion of pleasure. The apparition I am sure might have been unexpected at such a season; but when the good father conducted me into a large room where a long table was laid out with all sorts of nice things, dried fruits, apples, cheese, and numberless sundries occupying many tiny dishes spread over the long board, I felt a pang at my heart, for the thought struck me that our hosts

at the Sun had sent on a herald to announce the arrival of a party for whom the hermitical repast had been spread, whereas only an Angelina and Edwin found themselves together there.

The dress of the fathers is white, that of the brothers brown; the latter are attendants, but the fathers receive that order of the human species which is forbidden access to the monastery; most properly so, truly, for it is bad enough to have Englishmen making "pilgrimages" to the Grande Chartreuse in order to say stupid things about it, but to think of having it overrun by lady tourists, would be quite too ridiculous; yet one must suspect they are numerous, since the monks have built them a house, while they receive the other sex for a consideration, too often, I fear, a poor one, within their cloister.

"It is so sweet to serve our good Lord!" said that old monk to me: and a word spoken in season, how good is it. These words, spoken by that aged monk—his head lain on one shoulder from very age—were not forgotten by her who heard them; recalling, as they did, the words

spoken in a gayer time to her by a far different person—a missionary dissenter.

"Believe me, my young friend," he said in his own peculiar style, "believe me there is no happiness like that of serving the Lord Jesus."

And the aged monk of St. Bruno uttered, as it were, the Amen to the truth the dissenting minister expressed.

So this much good was gained at the monastery of La Grande Chartreuse, and it is but a poor day when we gain no good, or do no good. This, and with this, even a small portion of

> . . . . "the boundless store of good
> Which Nature to her votary yields,"

might make me content, and I gave my mite with good will, though I did not, like the good widow, whose act is generally most erroneously appropriated by those who do not wish to give much, give all I had.

There is a kind of cordial, or elixir made by the monks, which I did not taste nor buy, though

it is one of the few things that please English tastes: I think, however my taciturn guide must have had a draught of something that loosened the power of speech: or he might have left it at the monastery on his last visit and taken it back now; for on our ascent of the mountains, the most rigid of St. Bruno's disciples could not better observe the rule of silence, whereas on our descent his tongue went quite freely. He told some good stories of the fathers of the Desert, as he called them; but always added they were poor, very poor. Then he told me a lady had come to the convent in man's attire, and had been received as a man and lodged in the guest chamber for the two days, which is the term allowed for the stay of strangers, who during that time see in fact only as much of the monastery as may be seen and known in the chapel. But after the departure of this most impertinent visitor, lo and behold it was a woman! Bad as St. Bruno judged of the species from ancient examples, he could hardly have foreseen such future audacity.

"What did they do?" I exclaimed in horror.

"They brought out the bed she had slept in," said the man, "and burned it."

"Ah! if they could have burned her in it," I cried.

"That would have been so much the better," he answered gravely; "but in that case they would have seen her: and that would not do."

In an open space of the sombre, solemn forest I saw a sight that impressed me with a sense of silence and solitude more than anything in the region of La Grande Chartreuse. A large black patch appeared in the snowy earth; smoke rose over it: it was a bed of charcoal; near to it stood the charcoal burner—a little boy of, it might be, eleven or twelve years old.

Alone, in the dark, silent forest—the mountain forest with all its awe-imposing scenery! The idea that occurred to me was, that if Bruno had spent his early life like that boy, he would not have founded his convent in the desert, and

under the rule of silence. Man is generally the creature of extremes.

As we came down on the grassy slopes near to St. Laurent—a place, I understand, which has been burned up since that time—we saw Mr. Talbot, standing as if waiting our approach, a smile on his face, busy in what some one calls washing hands in invisible soap—an action which very often accompanies a sort of malicious expectation.

"Well," he said, "so you turned back," and he looked as if he might have added that he had been sure we should do so.

"Turned back? certainly: I did not mean to sleep at the convent."

"You don't mean to say you got there!"

"I do mean it, for I have."

He pushed one hand through his hair; gave his whiskers a pluck with the other, and looked queer.

When I gave an account of my visit to the Grand Chartreuse, of all the beautiful horrors of the road thither, and of the dear old monk who

received me, our elderly friend shook her head, sighed, and said:—

"I look upon it as a mercy, my dear, that you ever got out of that place:—but I suppose they are not Jesuits."

I once heard a Carthusian father preach; his sermon was most eloquent, and he was indeed renowned for eloquence: he was a portly, handsome man, of good healthy, rather florid complexion; after one of his most brilliant passages, he paused, declared the theme he preached on to be above his powers, and said:—"How can I speak to you, my brethren? I am but a poor monk, whose vocation it is to groan and keep silence."

The desert his brethren reclaimed speaks, however, for a vocation of more activity than this. Châteaubriand was one of the few writers who visited it in order to give at once a pleasing and good account of a place so full of interest. He saw the bodily labours of the men who worked with their own hands, and truly did not eat the bread of idleness. He saw the monks carry earth in

the skirt of their robes—a droll method, certainly—up the bare limestone rocks, and plant in it seedling pines—the pines that now spread tall and dark in the solemn gloom over the Desert of St. Bruno. And so they still work on, and the earth now yields her increase, and the trees they have planted may visit the ends of the earth, and bear the traffic of nations over the seas; for many a stately mast may be felled in the forests of the now impoverished monks of La Grande Chartreuse: their farms also are productive. Pity it is that the spirit of Christian love, of charity, should not be the pleasant companion of all those whom curiosity, or the strange notion of making pilgrimages in travelling carriages, lead to this singular retreat. It is but miserable taste to revile what is not understood, or to judge of what is really unknown.

The story of Bruno's conversion, which led to the foundation of the convent, is too well known to bear repetition. The legend of that learned friend of his, whose body would not allow itself to be buried, but three several times interrupted

the reading of the service by rising up on its bier, and declaring the condemnation of its departed spirit, has probably, like many similar things, grown out of the well-known fact that a story never loses in being told. Some remarkable occurrence at the funeral of a friend, who had lived, like himself, after the course of this world, led to Bruno's conversion; and, having fallen a prey to the world's seductions, he fled from what he had been powerless to resist, and with something of like mind, took refuge in a cave higher up than the convent on the wild mountains which his disciples now cover with earth and trees. Eight hundred years ago was that man buried, whose death caused the erection of La Grande Chartreuse. The miracle attached to the fact is not more wonderful than the fact itself.

The conversion of every sinner is miraculous; the understanding is not by natural things turned from darkness to light; the heart that holds enmity against God is not by natural means filled with love to God; the dead in tres-

passes and sin are not quickened to spiritual life in the ordinary course of nature. Not the mortal body rising up on its bier, but the resurrection of the Lord of Life for us that we being buried with Him by baptism unto death, may rise also in Him to newness of life, is the miracle by which every succeeding miracle of conversion is wrought. Not the voice of the dead, but the still small voice of His Spirit—still and small, yet powerful as the Archangel's that shall cause the dead to arise, is that which reaches the sinner's soul and speaks of sin and of righteousness and judgment.

Surely the children of St. Bruno do not increase the marvel of the founder's history by the addition of the legend which is appended to it. Eight hundred years has his convent stood; the original edifice many times burned down, and still rebuilt; its monks despoiled of their wealth, expelled by infidel violence, but still adhering to their rule, still to be found in their wild, solitary haunt. That old man with the pink face and white shiny skull had lived

through the terrible revolution; had been driven out to the world he had freely left, and when the storm was over had come back to the ark he had chosen; there he would die, there be buried; there rise again to give—like those passing travellers who go to see, and talk and judge of him and his brethren—account of his own works. Curious it is that in Paris I met a white-robed nun, whose head likewise hung on one side. Ninety years had passed over that head; at seventeen she had entered her cloister. She, too, had been driven into the world; her convent was made a gunpowder manufactory for the revolutionists; but the bird, driven from her nest, never folded her wings in strange resting places, and when the enemy was gone she came back as her brother did, and the one up in the Desert of Bruno, and the other far away in the great gay city of Paris, shewed a singular parallel life to the eyes of a wandering Anglican, albeit unknown in the flesh one to the other.

CHAPTER XI.

"WHERE are we going?" I asked the next afternoon, as we took our seats in the carriage, after an early dinner.

"To Chambery," was the answer.

"Savoy! are we going into Savoy?—what for?"

"To look if the Savoy cabbage grows there," said Mr. Talbot. "One of my friends made that the object of his research, and never found it."

I popped my head out of the window, and kept it there; and being exceedingly offended, I

gave myself up to observing the road we were travelling.

It soon afforded me enough to look at, though I suspect one at least of our ladies fully believed I was watching for a sight of the 'young Savoys.'

We had set out too late in the day, considering the advance of the season, but it was still quite light when we passed the fine tunnel, or as it is more prettily named, Grotto, of Les Echelles.

It is literally a tunnel cut through an immense mountain of rock, like that I before described in the Pyrenees, only much greater. It was partly made nearly 200 years ago, by Charles Emanuel of Savoy, and that great engineer, Napoleon I., completed it; but through the former difficult Pass had walked Pope Pius VII. to perform, compulsorily, his coronation, an immense multitude of people following his steps.

The mother of the present Emperor of France, Napoleon III., opened this tunnel, the last slight

screen of which was blown up while she was in it to let her pass. The rock in primitive times was scaled by ladders, and from thence came the name of the small town, Les Echelles. The passage is about 900 feet long, and so wide that diligences can pass each other on their road through it. It was finished at a critical epoch—1813.

The Gorge of La Chaille is truly grand, and the moon rose while we threaded its defile, mid rocks and trees that were all white and glistening in snow. It was a lovely scene, but it is hard to enjoy such scenery in a carriage. I should have preferred the mule, although my head was out of the window. Immense walnut trees, and magnificent oaks, as well as mulberries, abound here, and their great forms, together with the dark rocks and the sound of water, when seen on a snowy surface beneath the newly risen, full orbed moon, made up a picture tantalizing when only viewed from a carriage window.

About here is the cascade 'immortalized, they say, by Jean Jacques Rousseau—La Char-

mettes—the spot is so charming that I could have wished to dissever it from the associations of such immortalizations. My poor French master had tried hard to make me admire and like Rousseau; it never was in my nature to do either. Yet he too enjoyed this scenery. How can the mind that is false in religion be true to Nature. Rousseau never seemed to me to be so.

It was a bright, clear, beautiful night when we arrived at the barrier of Pont de Beauvoisin: the frontier between France and Sardinia. My dear friends, for whose information I have put on paper this narration of the travels in which a search after you entangled me, I have now to say that if at that barrier, I disappear for ever from paper, you may lay the abrupt or fatal end of my rambles to the charge of the most terrible of all beings—a female revenue officer.

Progress they say has done great things; one would fain hope it has swept away 'female searchers;' bad enough to fall into such hands

at the 'lock up' of a police station; but think of a decent, quiet traveller undergoing the operation? You know what it is to invest women with 'a little brief authority;' if men in such cases play such fantastic tricks as make the angels weep, only think what tricks women must play.

All round the hem of my dress; the skirts of my clothing, were felt, if by chance I had sewed therein some contraband goods; my dimensions were accurately taken; my pockets rifled; all, save one article, taken out of them. That one I had pinned most securely with two, or, I think four pins, to the side of a capacious pocket. The searcher felt the same package; her eyes gleamed; out it must come; and out, I declared, it should not come. I was in a regular fury; the searcher, naturally, more calmly and determinately active. With cruel perseverance she worked out the pins, detached the little packet; brought it to the light; unfolded wrapper after wrapper, and displayed at last—my whole fortune—the last that remained of my English

bank notes—one of a solitary figure. She began to re-enclose it in the numerous wrappers; I snatched it from her hands; but what I afterwards did with it, or myself, must remain in mystery. All that she absolutely took from me was my temper; and if, good friends, you have found me as destitute of that valuable possession as poor Peter Schemel was of a shadow, believe that it was taken from me by the female searcher at the Sardinian barrier.

At that barrier, like one of the mountain torrents that sportively dashed from sight, I mean to disappear; grumbling and moaning in the darkness of some unknown depth. But I hope, if the vagaries of My First Travels have amused you, that you will look out for my re-appearing, as I used to do for that of my pleasant mountain comrade.

CHAPTER XII.

AGAIN in Paris—in a vast boarding house—a human menagerie. A little wiser it is to be supposed, than when I was in the blue house with good Miss Strict. I have seen some part of the world we live in, I have had a little of what is called experience: now I sit again in a little chamber—for go where I may, a little chamber is allotted to me—and I sit in it and ask myself, for what purpose do we live? what object do we pursue in this passing life? Many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, but knowledge satisfieth not; the eye is not satisfied with

seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the mind by learning.

The object of human life is to be happy; happiness, is the end all aim at, be the means of obtaining that end ever so various. The man who toils day after day, chained like a galley slave to the oar of mammon, adding piece to piece and gold to gold, sacrificing all that appears to be pleasure, has the same end in view as the idler who squanders gold and time among strangers, and gains in return the renown attached to folly. Who reaches the end so toilsomely sought, who can say in the words of Schiller,

> "Father, take back thy child,
> I have fulfilled the end of my creation;
> I have lived, and have been happy."

Who has known that moment when no recollection of the past, no shadow of the future alloyed the perfection of the happiness that was attained?

How wonderful is that cry of the great prophet of Israel, "Ho! every one that thirsteth,

come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat." The cry is to every human soul, for each soul is athirst for what money cannot buy.

Why do I think of this? Because I am in a great Parisian boarding house. The French are not much addicted to the boarding house system, and our society is made up of about fifty English, Scotch, and Irish ladies. What on earth we are all doing here, or what business we have to be here, I occupy myself in trying to make out. To do crochet and wool work, to eat four meals a day in company, and play cards all the evening is pretty nearly the sum total of a daily life, which might, methinks, be as well spent in London as in Paris: yet one of these good ladies has spent twenty years here.

The strange part of it to me is that with the exception of that good woman who has lived these twenty years in a Paris boarding house, giving as her reason for doing so that people would visit her there in a coach and six—provided always that people drive in coaches and

six, and chanced to know of her existence in this world—with this one exception the general tone of the English conversation that goes on here is against France and the French. Everything in the house is made as uncomfortably English as possible; indeed, you could hardly believe it to be a French one, therefore I suppose it is that the usual subject of animadversion is the religion of the country; it would almost appear that the foreign atmosphere had the effect of reducing, or, as the chemists say, resolving all their English religion into a detestation of French religion; it is the only mode in which the former is made visible, if expressed; and it is the manner, too generally, in which the religion of ardent protestants who voluntarily take up their abodes in catholic countries, is expressed. Perhaps in the position in which they choose to place themselves their religion must of necessity be more heard of than seen.

Now among all these fifty British ladies, not one appeared to have any definite purpose in life: some were old maids; some would not be

called old; some, and at least an equal number, were widows, and a few were said to have living husbands. I could not help calling to mind the remark of my talented friend, Mr. R. C———, "It would be a good thing if we had houses of charity, and works of charity to employ the superfluous women of England."

Uncomplimentary man! Most heartily does a wanderer on the continent often join in your wish.

To have enough to live on, and not to have, as is commonly said, any particular object in living anywhere, is often a harder lot than to be tied by stern necessity to one spot, and to work on it for daily food.

"It is pleasant to have an object for a walk," said a lady, still young and active enough, as she saw me come in very tired and muddy from my explorations of Paris. I happened to be in great want of a companion for the next day, and I eagerly asked if she would come with me and share my object.

"What is it?" she languidly enquired. "I

have seen all the sights: one gets so tired of sight-seeing: I should think you, too, must have seen all."

"No. I have yet to see how a great many of the women of Paris employ themselves."

"Nonsense! Go to the theatres, to the ball-rooms, to the Champs Elysées, to the modistes, to the garden of the Tuilleries;—or, if you want to see in what manner they work—to the offices and railway stations, where you will find them acting as clerks and signalmen: or you may go—"

"To places where it is not easy to go," I interrupted, looking very wise and important, but where they work in quite a different manner."

"What do you mean?"

I opened my hand, and shewed a letter on thin paper, with a curious stamp and episcopal seal.

"What on earth is that for?"

"It is to admit me to the Houses of Charity of Paris."

"Well, there will not be much to see in that

way; the Parisians are too much given up to dissipation and pleasure to care about charitable works, though they do encourage begging in the streets, and have their churches thronged with beggars."

"Will you come and see what we can see?"

"Well, as I have nothing else particular to do —but of course you cannot expect to find anything in France like the religious societies of England: religion is made a very easy thing here."

I thought it really seemed to be so, and I went up to my chamber thinking that an easy religion was pleasant, and wondering if it were also safe.

CHAPTER XIII.

PARIS! to the outward eye, the seat of all worldly seductions; the emporium of all worldly pleasures; the place, truly, where the life of the world is most easily and fully enjoyed; where the gratification of all tastes and all senses, is most obtainable, and where the restraints of religion, the fetters of morality are usually believed to be most lightly worn—Paris!—it is strange to repeat the very name, and yet dissever it for the time from all such associations: strange to feel oneself drop away from all thoughts of such life, and plunge into one totally different, yet know oneself to be in Paris still!

There are in fact two broadly distinct life-currents in this wonderful capital: not those of the high and the low—the rich and the poor, the working and the idle:—those who have pleasures, and those who have none:—these exist in London in a far more distinct and visible manner. There is an outer and an inner life in Paris; like two minds in one human body; separated from each other, like the mind that follows its own course through a mechanical routine of external acts performed by the outward form it inhabits.

By its outer life Paris is known: its inner life is not so easy to approach: its breathings are by no means as audible as they would be if placed among ourselves: they do not make themselves heard at religious meetings, in platform speeches, or religious newspaper vituperations: one never hears them at charitable dinners, nor are they uttered in formidable committee lists, heralded forth by the names of the great. You must, indeed, get very near that inner life of Paris, and feel its breathings, or you will not be

likely to hear them at all. And that is the reason why so many of our country women, who visit Paris constantly, or live in it even permanently, can tell you what an immoral and dissipated place it is, and can very fluently contrast it with all the good that is carried on by the religious people of religious England, without having the very least idea of all that contributes to, or is comprised in this inner, and almost hidden life of the gayer, brighter, more pleasure-loving capital.

Some few of our travellers did find it out, and the discovery surprised them very much, and fascinated them too much: they wished not to imitate, but to share it; and so they went out from us. Such is often the result of violent or unjust prejudice being overcome. It is, indeed, somewhat astonishing to oneself how soon, on closing the mental sight to the outer life of Paris, and opening it only to the inner, there grows up a different world around you; and then becoming immersed in the under current into which you drop, you cease almost to recollect

that traditionary Paris in which you had always believed, and of which your fathers had told you.

This could not be the case in London. It has been well said, as the grand source of this distinction, that in Paris, Nôtre Dame is as much a fact as the Palais Royal. The religious life of London by no means ranges itself as its visible head, under Westminster Abbey, or St. Paul's. In Paris we may take Nôtre Dame and the Palais Royal as the representative of the two lives we speak of. It is by the latter the gay capital is usually recognised: its traditionary existence under that head is, to English minds, associated with ideas of gaiety, enjoyment, luxury, vivacity, pleasure, folly, vice, dissipation, sin, crime, misery, ruin. So it has been: so it is; the traditionary associations are true; the Palais Royal is a fact, and may stand for the head of the outer Parisian life.

But Nôtre Dame, the metropolitan church, is a fact also—the head of the inner life; and this fact, so intangible to us in general, is the repre-

sentative of—what?—a vast deal of what we do not see, nor even hear of, but at some part of which the Head of Nôtre Dame most graciously condescended to let me have a peep, by giving me a circular note to procure me admission to houses otherwise closed against such inquisitive intruders.

The Archbishop of Paris is the actual, living, and abiding head of all that inner life which in more or less degree circulates around him: and this explains how Nôtre Dame is said to be as much a fact as the Palais Royal: it is the representation, as it were, of all the vast living organization of religious and charitable work in that capital. And it is in watching the simple, yet perfect self-moving machinery by which these various works go on, in observing the unity, yet diversity of their operation, in conversing with their agents, or witnessing their results, that we get a glance into a hidden Paris, as unlike the external one as it is unlike all our stereotyped opinions about the entire capital.

Not to speak of its exclusively religious, or

cloistered institutions, there are, I think, about 150 charitable ones for the amelioration of the outward miseries of humanity, in addition, of course, to the great hospitals. Many of these, while secular in their nature, are still connected with the church and, while not having their ruling power in themselves, possess through this union, that sap which is necessary to maintain their vigour.

Now, as external Paris is so well known, as well almost as London, to most of our people, I took it into my head that I would try to explore this, as it were, internal Paris; that I would try to get a peep into that inner life which my own brain suggested to me did exist in this brilliant metropolis of the civilized world, away from all its elegant seductions, its fascinating temptations; did exist in hidden places, separated and distinct from that mighty life of the world which heaved and panted around it.

Such a research possesses interest in itself; it is like the attempt to explore a cavern wherein we suspect there is something more curious than

the objects on the surface of the earth around us. One cannot help reflecting on the fact that virtue ever seeks quiet and hidden ways wherein to repel vice; that good chooses to move in an under current to meet the open, over-boiling torrent of evil; that charity works in secret to undo the noisy, ever present labour of mammon; that piety loves the path of peace, and whispers her answers to the trumpet voiced taunts of irreligion.

So we set forth on our research, carrying the episcopal missive as our guiding light.

We reach a large portal, ring a great bell; the door opens, as usual, invisibly; within it we see a sweet, young, rosy, innocent-looking face, rather quaintly encircled by the round border of what is commonly called a widow's cap. No hair is visible, and the white linen that binds up the forehead and lower jaw, though only what was centuries ago the fashion, now tells us that the rosy-faced girl is a *réligieuse*, and not a happy-looking widow. She is sitting in a little porter's box, and looking out of the large glass

window, from which she has pulled the cord that opened the door.

"What is your business, ladies?" she asks in a voice as sweet as her face.

The archiepiscopal seal is presented in answer. An invitation to enter the convent follows. We are seated in the parlour, and the rosy young sister carries the note to her superior. Presently appears a very gracious and motherly-looking old lady, who makes us quite at home, in the most good-humoured and agreeable manner.

And into what a singular scene and society are we then admitted! This house is in connection with the chief House of Refuge in Paris; it contains between five and six hundred unhappy women, the grades of vice or of crime separated from each other by such a distinct classification that additional corruption seems to be impossible; the degrees of comparison, while dwelling under the same roof, never meet, never come in contact one with the other, either in working, feeding, or recreation time. The superior told us that a girl who had been led to evil

by a wicked companion might live in that house with the same companion for years without ever knowing she was there; or the contrary, likewise, occur. The ages of the inmates originally ranged from sixteen to twenty-three; a department has been added for the reception of women of more advanced life. One class consists of those who, in addition to moral pollution, have become criminals in the eye of the law, and are placed here by the police as delinquents, as girls are now placed in the reformatories which of recent days have become fashionable in England; these are perfectly distinct from such as enter voluntarily, or are placed there by the friends.

The constitution of the house is not conventual; it resembles in some respects the ordinary English system, that is to say, it has been founded by an association of charitable ladies, who interest themselves in its maintenance, but the point of difference in the system is a very wide one indeed. It is that, instead of a matron, and a visiting committee to direct or worry her, the work is placed under the direction of the

ladies of St. Thomas de Villeneuve, an order who, unlike the better known Sisters of Charity of Vincent de Paul, extend their labours to the miserable outcasts of female society. The ladies or sisters of St. Thomas de Villeneuve, are not nuns; they are an active order, whose functions are, primarily, attending hospitals, teaching schools, and conducting penitentiaries, or, as we would call a branch of the latter work, Reformatories. There is one feature of this work that throws some light on what I have chosen to call the inner life of this great and gay capital.

Numbers of these poor unfortunates are taken from the lowest haunts of wickedness, from the deepest abyss of misery, from lighter spheres of sin and folly, from prisons, from want and ruin, by ladies who, to the outward eye, have nothing akin to that life whereof we speak: ladies as bright, as elegant, as fashionable and brilliant as the most glittering circles of Paris can produce. No sad coloured garments, no quaint attire, no peculiar bonnet, or attesting veil declares to you that they are engaged in good works.

You may meet at the court, the ball room, the opera, the workroom, or the shop, both men and women who, while in every respect the same outwardly as those of their own rank, are the active coadjutors of the religious and charitable orders; united with them, though with no badge exhibited of such an association. You would not imagine that the charming Frenchwoman, whom even a nun if she be French, you cannot forbear admiringly to say is so *bien mise*—so well dressed, and who steps into her carriage with all the grace of a lady of fashion, is one known by the title of a '*dame de Charité*." There are Ladies of Charity, as well as Sisters of Charity; the latter wear a very distinctive dress, the former, living in their own sphere are undistinguished by any peculiarity that tells their neighbours there is any difference between them.

Such is the case with men also; there are many societies and associations with which young men who mix in all the life of the world, take part; and the most polite and pleasant

among whom, you may meet at a place of amusement one day, and find at a poor man's sick bed the next; or hear of as the 'protector' of some friendless boy who was taken charge of by the society to which he belongs, and apprenticed to a trade at his expense; or even of a girl who depends on him for her education and training till she is of age to work for herself. There is nothing to tell you that the lady or the gentleman are, while shining in the gay circles of society, engaged in undoing what many members of the same circle are constantly contributing to do.

It is thus that the inner and outer life of Paris may almost meet, and yet the point of union be completely undiscernible.

This never has been the case in England, at least not in reformed times; dress, speech, manner are much more demonstrative among us. The ladies connected with this House have the care of replacing in the world such of the penitents, or the reformed, as are enabled to return to its honest work and occupations; they

are never sent out unprovided for, let the term of their stay be ever so long, unless they insist on going out themselves.

The Superior told us that it was always with fear she saw them go forth again to meet the temptations of life; and that to those who shewed true penitence and a suitable disposition the choice of devoting themselves to the religious life was given: her house was as it were the feeding place for two others, both cloistered convents, but at one of which, La Madelaine, the nuns are penitents; living as the nuns at the other convents do, and the only restriction being that they must have a superior from that convent and not one chosen from their own community; they cannot rule in their convent, and their superior is appointed from that of St. Michael. But they are allowed there to separate themselves for ever from the world wherein they have feebly fought and deeply fallen; beaten in the hard battle of life, they find there an abiding refuge, a calm retreat, a safe shelter; and are permitted the high privilege of dedicating a

ransomed existence to God, and to the help of their fellow sufferers.

In the first, or lowest class room we visited, the aspect of the poor creatures was not prepossessing. The degrees of comparison are melancholy—bad, worse, worst—but they also go on in the ascending scale—good, better, best—none mixing one with the other. So many young women, whose lives were marred for ever is a sad spectacle. They wore dark dresses and flat black caps, like skull caps, which did not tend to improve a forbidding aspect of many among them; they had not very subdued or heart-broken looks.

I asked the superior if they were cheerful.

"They can be so," she replied. "Ah! my children, can you not—at recreation?"

A low laugh, and a buzz through, I think, two hundred young unfortunates, were followed by the words:

"Yes, my mother, yes."

"What do they have for breakfast?" I said, from a mere sense of stupidity, not knowing

what to say, for there was something in the laugh and in the tones that reminded me of what I once heard an Irish lady call "deadly liveliness." Indeed, it appears to my mind that this opening of the valve for the outlet of the natural temperament at the stated times called recreation, and its abrupt shutting up at an equally given hour, must be rather detrimental to that equanimity of mind which it is the great purpose of all such institutions to produce. The custom, however, is too universal not to be supposed to work well.

In answer to a question that might have appeared indiscreet, the kindest looking of all superiors informed me at once that they had coarse bread and red water for breakfast.

Red water! I was thinking what that was when she explained.

"Water with a little dash of wine, scarcely more than colours it; they were too poor to have coffee or any luxuries."

It is no easy matter even to walk through such houses; what the care of them must be,

resting on one head, would be a mystery if we did not know something of that complete organization which is their moving spring, and which, while it is the desideratum of all our religious or charitable works, is perhaps, more perfect in France than in any country of the world. The French character seems adapted to organization; in whatever department we look at, from the organization of the grand army down to that of an omnibus company, we see that well and ill-organised are terms understood by the most illiterate of the people. In the best department of the house we saw a woman who had been in it for thirty-five years. She could not or would not go back to the world, and she had no vocation for La Madelaine.

"There can then be no limitation to the time your children remain here," we said.

"They must remain with us till the good Lord calls them to go," was the reply.

"Calls them to go! Where?"

"Perhaps back to the world, if they are able to go there, and that we can place them in secu-

rity in it: but that is often difficult. Perhaps to go to Himself, and that is best of all for them if they are converted; sometimes there is a vocation for the religious life, and then they go to the Magdalen. But those whom we cannot place out, who do not wish to leave us, who do not die, and who have have no vocation, certainly they remain with us."

"But then you might receive still more if, as is generally the rule in England, your children only stay for two years."

She looked at me thoughtfully, and answered:

"We consider it is better to do a great deal of good to a few than a little good to a great many. We must not send any out to fall again; then it would be better not to have taken them, for we took them, probably, when they were in ignorance, and if we suffer them to fall again when we have taught them to know better then we make their fault the greater. We wish to save souls."

There was something conclusive in the last

affirmation, and I fancied there was the least possible emphasis on the personal pronoun.

"I should think, then, your house must be almost always full."

"Generally it is, as you see, pretty well filled, but there are vacancies. Many go as they come, voluntarily; some become good and return to their friends; others are placed out to work; some die; some are converted, and embrace the religious life. You will now see our chapel?"

It is the chapel only that is generally shewn to inquisitive strangers, and this chapel has left a very pleasing impression on my mind. It was large, handsome, yet plain; and prominently before us on entering appeared one object so peculiarly adapted to the character of the place, that I could not help wishing our efforts to reclaim the lost or straying might have the same significant emblem. It was a well executed statue of the Good Shepherd, with the sheep that was lost in the wilderness laid on His shoulder. It stood over the altar, which was otherwise devoid of ornament; a simple white cover, with a slight

border of violet worked round it, no colours, nor frippery of any sort; and above it the large, white, solemnly mild statue, telling the poor fallen ones of Him who came to seek and to save those that were lost; telling the faithful servants who are following His steps, that inasmuch as they do good to the least of these His children, they do it unto Him.

I thought of the words the superior lately uttered—" We wish to save souls."

Our dear Lord would not drop that recovered sheep—Of those whom my Father hath given me have I lost none—None shall pluck them out of my hand. He left ninety-and nine, to seek one, and that one was laid on his shoulder. And to those who would follow His blessed steps it is more cause of rejoicing to bring one straying sheep within the Eternal fold, than to show the way thither only, to ninety and nine.

That figure of the Good Shepherd in that vast house of recovery for the sheep that are lost in the fearful wilds of this wicked world, has haunted me ever since. It spoke without speech:

it was a beautiful exposition of all I had been learning from the superior.

And beside me stood a friend who, up to that hour, had really believed that in immoral Paris, immorality was thought lightly of: that religion there, so far as it went, was an outward thing; that it consisted in forms and stated performances. She never before had the smallest glimpse into the workings of the inner life of that great world. She did not know that in Paris people were living and working solely to bring back the lost to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

Yes, in immoral Paris, in equally immoral London, all in their several vocations whom Christ's love has ever touched, will try in their degree to do so; each following, nearer or further off the track of the blessed footprints He has left.

I often think of that little rosy sister in her quaint widow's cap, sitting in the porter's box, with the keen winter air freshening her healthy colour; how little of all that we conventionally

ascribe to the nun was in her aspect: true, she was not one in the exact sense of the word—she was not of a cloistered order, but in cloisters I have seen the same. That aspect was the evidence of a natural congenial state—without affectation or unreality.

On another excursion I saw one of the same community, who appeared to me less happily placed. It was in the ward of an immense hopital for sick children, chiefly those affected by scrofula. Poor, little miserable victims, on whom the judgment of the sins of the fathers being visited on the children, appeared to have fallen—victims of the parents' vices, neglect, or selfish inconsideration of the miseries which their marriages might entail on their children and children's children.

Several hundreds of such children were in the hospital; and perfect as were the arrangements, I never visited one that was so painful to see, nor one in which I would not rather be an attendant.

It is so unnatural to see children, and above

all, French children, who are usually so much cared for by their parents in all ranks, thus congregated as strangers, and yet companions in suffering.

Those who had been some time there, lay in their neat cribs with a face of such resignation, so unnatural to childhood, that it was more painful to look at them, than to see others that were in a natural state of contortion and impatience, or to hear the last comers screaming, moaning, or whining.

And among them all was moving from bed to bed a young sister of St. Thomas de Villeneuve: her dark eyes a little too bright, and a flush on her youthful cheek that told of fatigue and exertion. She was very young, and very pretty.

"How can you bear this?" I exclaimed, after a futile attempt to conquer my repugnant disposition.

"Our dear Lord bore much more for us," was the quiet reply, with a smile that said, I do not rebuke you.

"O!" I added hastily, "I could attend wounded soldiers, dying sailors—I could do anything but be among a vast multitude of suffering children, whom I could neither manage nor relieve."

"We do both," she said smiling more brightly, and as if amused with my naughtiness, "and besides, you know, our dear Saviour pleased not himself."

"But you are tired," I said, looking pitifully at the burning flush and eyes before me.

"There is eternity for our repose," she rejoined, with another rather provoking smile, for it somehow said, I had not thought of that.

"But you must want a change," I urged, feeling my own wings inclined to spread; "do you never change?"

"When our Superior changes us."

"But you weary of this life?"

Yes, said I to myself, I have now come to the point, she will own the truth.

"Not now," she answered with a little sigh.

"One does so at first—ah! yes; one has ennui then."

"And when one had ennui, what did one do then?"

"Pray to God."

"And does not ennui come now?"

"Sometimes."

"And then?"

"One tells it to God, and the ennui passes."

I repeat the conversation as it passed; this was so simple and straightforward a mode of answering a troublesome questioner; and moreover her mode of getting rid of ennui, that horror of French existence, seemed to me much better than that so commonly practised among English of "all denominations," high and low, of telling all their grievances, all their trials, in which perhaps rather more of their merits than their sinfulness comes out, to their spiritual guides.

"We tell our ennui to God," said one who had to confess her sins to the priest also. It would be more easy for poor human nature to reverse the method.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was what we call a miserable day; there had been a succession of such days, and to judge from skies as sullen, leaden, and obstinate-looking as any English ones, we must expect the succession to continue. Unfortunately the day before I had called at the great convent of St. Michael, and having sent in my missive to the Superior, had received from her a most polite message, fixing the hour of two o'clock for my reception. I had two previous visits to make to similar places, and notwithstanding the ceaseless fall of rain, and the deplorable condition of the streets, I re-

solved to go on my missions. Now, considering I was going into a cloistered convent of women who had forsaken the world with all its vanities and fripperies, I thought I should be esteemed in proportion to the plainness of my attire, and the degree in which I made it approximate to their own. I clothed myself in a black gown—it was not a very new one, but I believed its age and its colour alike suitable to my purpose; then I put on a little black bonnet and a veil I actually bought for the occasion; it was of the kind which I supposed was considered at all events semi-religious; and I fancied I was equipped like "a lady of charity," or an associated sister, or something of that order. And thus I went forth.

The streets of Paris were full of the whitest mud I ever saw: no carriages unemployed were to be met, and if they had been I had some sort of feeling that it was more creditable, because more humble and self-denying to go to a convent on foot; and though I had not acquired the art of Parisian walking through mud without being

splashed and spattered by it, I concluded that a little mire on my black robe would only be another sign of having, as well as the nuns, renounced the pomps and vanities of this world.

At last my dreary walk was ended, and I reached the convent with clothes heavy from rain and mire. The porteress took the dripping umbrella into the lodge, and then requested me to accompany her to another entrance; and then, instead of being shewn into the parlour, she led me into a sort of gallery, the end of which was closed by large folding doors. There was no seat, nor any sort of furniture, so I remained standing where she left me, just before the closed doors, on which my eyes naturally rested as there was nothing else to look at.

I had not long to stand so, not longer than it would require for the porteress to announce my arrival; and I was expecting to see some nun come noiselessly in, to conduct me to the little parlour where visitors are received, when a slight sliding sound quickened the gaze of my

eyes at the great doors; back they flew, sliding into their recess, and the effect was precisely that of the drawing up of the curtain of the stage. Never shall I forget that sight! Never was dismay more complete than mine. Within those doors, two steps below me, the whole community, with the superior at its head, were drawn up to receive the English lady who was sent by the Archbishop of Paris! Every eye full of expectation; that of the Superior actually gleaming with delight at the coup de théâtre she had prepared. It was a picturesque scene. Perhaps a hundred nuns, all robed in clean white dresses —and those dresses cannot always be clean— with their black veils heightening the pure whiteness of the linen beneath them, all bowing forward slow and gracefully to the stranger who stood elevated a little above them and feeling, to use a common and expressive saying, ready to sink into the ground beneath her.

What caused this awkward conviction of having made a mistake was the utter disappointment too legibly expressed on the hundred faces

before me. That they had never expected or desired to see their strange visitor in a semi-nun-like costume, putting the effects of rain and mud aside, I was directly convinced, and felt at once that my appearance would have given much more satisfaction had it only been a little more *á la mode.*

There are few things perhaps more really trying than such blunders to the unhappy being who commits them: awkwardness and humiliation make one feel to grow physically little; and when I descended those two steps I almost wished my black robed person was only small enough to be completely absorbed in the great white mass into which it dropped.

The poor Superior—I afterwards felt for her too, though at the trying moment I could only feel for myself—her countenance lost some of its intense disappointment when I confusedly accounted for my costume by laying it to the charge of the bad weather, and the fact that I had been visiting some Houses of Charity.

She turned to her expecting community and

briefly made my apology in her own words, and much more forcibly. So that I saw she had proposed to them a little treat in receiving the strange guest; for this convent being one of the strictest order, such visits are rare.

The plea of my good works in excuse of my neglected toilette was however only made by myself; and as we went from room to room she announced me with a very graceful gesture as a foreign lady from Monseigneur, who had been obliged to make "A long course in the bad weather."

In England we could hardly have a notion of such a house as that: its immense size; its large community; the astonishing number of poor outcasts who are sheltered in it. With such a population a rural clergyman might almost think he had enough of parish work. One could believe it possible to live for years in it, unacquainted with many beneath its roof. Yet each was intimately known to the scarcely middle-aged superior, who walked by my side; though, from the excellent system of classification before

alluded to, women who had been companions in the sins, the so-called pleasures, or the crimes of the world, might live there unconscious that they had found the same refuge; the closest friends, the greatest enemies—the seducer and seduced, the comparatively guiltless and the wholly depraved—together, yet apart in that vast asylum of the unfortunate.

The community drawn up in state to receive me, dispersed when, as I felt with intense mortification, the darting back of the folding doors, realized most disagreeably the old fable of the mountain and the mouse. The white-robed mass seemed to melt away, I knew not how—it was gone, and I was alone with the keen, bright-faced superior, and a very little, very soft-countenanced nun. She was also very plump—quite, what some one who certainly never framed to himself such a picture as that now around me, has styled a dumpy woman; her cheeks were, to all appearance, soft, and good white and red; this colour, however, varied; flushing and paling in that remarkable way that indicates susceptibility

of mind. It seemed to do so whenever I looked at her, and that naturally made me look the oftener.

We entered a large room, along one end of which were ranged about a hundred young creatures whose countenances were by no means disagreeable, morose, or sad. A nun was in a sort of reading desk, elevated above them, and at the farther end was another who held a book. These were all the teachers; the most profound stillness reigned when we entered. The superior with one hand gracefully extended towards me, began her announcement—A foreign lady from Monseigneur—but she was interrupted by such a buzz as I never heard before or since. The tone was low, but as simultaneous as universal. "*La petite mère! la petite mère!—la chère petite mère!*"

A quiver ran through the mass of dark figures that were so contrasted with the white nuns. It was like a passing breeze disturbing the stillness of a summer wood.

The superior stopped and looked at the little

attendant nun, whom I saw cowering confusedly behind me with her face dyed to crimson. No eye was bent on the superior; no glance bestowed on the strange lady from Monseigneur and her spattered black dress: all eyes were directed with an ardour of the fondest affection the little nun. That buzz of joy, that irrepressible burst of nature which vented itself in the murmur—of the little mother! the little mother! the dear little mother!—was drawn forth by her appearance.

I thought this favouritism was not quite pleasing to the superior; her face was overcast: as for the little mother—for in all these houses, as well as those for education—all the nuns are called mothers, not sisters—she kept behind my shoulder, confused, blushing, her large blue eyes almost suffused with tears. The superior moved on; the murmured words of '*La mère, Saint Michel*—the dear mother Saint Michel,' followed us to the door. The sight of that little nun had sent an electric movement through that dark mass of humanity, as the passing

breeze of summer causes the leaves of the forest to quiver.

And so, within a convent, does the power of affection work.

"How hot it is," said the little nun, in French, applying her hand to her flushed and burning cheeks. "*Comme il fait chaud!*"

I was shivering with cold; but it was not her words that attracted my attention and gave me a sort of glad surprise, it was the voice, the unmistakable accent.

"You are English—Irish, rather," I exclaimed smiling.

"Do you know me?" she asked, in a low voice.

"No."

"How then do you know I am Irish?"

"By your voice—your accent."

"My voice!—why I have been seven years here; but speak French," she added, hastily glancing at the superior; "is it possible," she continued in French, "that I have not lost my accent?"

"Not at all. I knew at once, not only the English acccent but the Irish voice."

And now I found out the secret of that countenance that had raised my sympathy from the first. There was nothing in the little nun's aspect to excite pity; she did not look as if she either fasted or worked too much. There was nothing to make a romantic story out of; she did not look at all like a compulsory nun longing to make an escape. Yet there was that whole expression of face that would seem to say she was intended to be a loving, comfortable mother to her own children; one of a little home circle within which her affections centred. Lest she should think my last speech as uncomplimentary, as I am sure her French superior did, I added that I thought the Irish voice was peculiarly sweet.

The blue eyes were instantly suffused with tears, tears which she painfully strove to repress or to hide.

"It is so hot! it is so hot!" she said, as she endeavoured with hand and veil to do the latter.

Poor thing! the memory of some Irish voices sweet as sweetest music to her ear, no doubt rose up at my words.

"It is very warm indeed," I replied, I suppose, metaphorically, for certainly I was not sensible of extreme warmth.

For two hours, at one time, the kind superior occupied herself in conducting me about her house, showing me what was going on, and explaining, so far as explanation could be given, what was doing.

I was really too often lost in that kind of dull admiration which is unfavourable to profitable attention; a sort of wonder at that organization by which such great works go on as it were like a self-spinning machine; once put in motion, it works on apparently by its own volition. The Church sets it at work, supplies its power, and it goes on in conformity to the rules which govern its whole working: watched over and regulated by that decided-looking Superior, whose slightest movements announce that she is absolute in this her dominion.

The beauty of all organization must be simplicity. It is precisely what almost all our works of charity, as well as other public matters, appear to want. We are fond of cumberous machinery, and when we have got it together we want the moving springs to keep it at work.

We can imagine what such a house would become if controlled by a committee.

There is one feature in the mode of treatment of these poor women quite different from anything that is, I believe, practised among us; that is that they take no part in the household work, and are employed only in quiet, or sedentary works. They do not wash, or cook, or clean the rooms; they are something quite apart from the ordinary life of the community. We should find it difficult to get work for them to do, but I understood that this difficulty was not felt.

It was evening when I entered the outer, or public chapel, while the choir nuns were singing vespers in their own, which was separated by a screen, but a screen so contrived as to allow

glimpses to be seen that certainly were most effective. The movements of the white figures and large floating veils were quite visible from the post I occupied. Another screen shut in what was termed the penitents' chapel; but this screen was a totally different one; it was of black stuff, and the arrangement was such that though they might see the altar, they could scarcely see the priest who stood below it.

In this chapel was also the penitents' confessional, and instead of the little window, or speaking place, being left open, the entire was covered up by a tightly fastened screen of green stuff, so thick that while the voices were distinct, no glimpse either of penitent or confessor could be seen by either.

"They never see him," said the superior: "they never see the face of a man while they are with us."

"But the nuns see their chaplain, or confessor?"

"Ah! that is quite another thing: we are not they."

"You do not then require the aid of a clergyman to help you to reduce them to order if they are naughty?"

She opened her eyes, and looked at me; and then, as if pardoning my stupidity, she waved her hand with a graceful inclination towards the green shrouded box, and said:

"He only speaks to them there. You perceive how it is arranged."

From the elevated post I occupied, the view of the Nun's chapel was quite scenic. The dress of the lay sisters who do the household work is almost more remarkable and picturesque than that of the others; and as they stood, knelt, or those who were singing moved about, making the sundry lowly, and most graceful reverences, the effect on the spectator who beheld them from a distance, and listened to the solemnly melodious voices, had somewhat of mysteriousness, perhaps, predominating over its devotional influence.

On our return from the chapel, I was conducted by immense galleries, containing from sixty to seventy, most exquisitely neat little

cells. I called to mind the time when I believed a monastic cell identical with that of a dungeon. These neat little chambers, with a tolerably large white curtained bed, a table and chair in each, were the fac simile of each other; and all looked as if belonging to an uninhabited house. Not the least article of dress or of toilette—not even a looking glass—(how can a French woman, even if a nun, do without one?)—nothing visible that could indicate all that we mean by the peculiar term "my own room" in common life.

"And here is the Superior's cell," said that august personage, smiling a peculiar smile, "you see it is just like the others."

So it was; there was the bed with its white curtains, a rug for the feet beside it, the white walls totally bare, no picture, no religious symbol, no ornament of any kind; the walls, the floor, the table, all were bare; all but the bed, and you will not find a nun's bed left without its drapery. One of the prettiest sights of the kind I ever saw, was a large dormitory for the pupils of an Ursuline convent, each little bed shrouded

in a graceful snowy enclosure. To be without curtains would appear a breach of the modesty so carefully observed.

"There is one advantage which the chamber of the Superior possesses," she continued, "and I assure you that one is a great consolation to me, and often gives me strength."

As she spoke, with one of those firm, decided movements that I often observed, she advanced, and threw open the heavy window sash, giving me a splendid view of the environs of Paris, on which I naturally commented, supposing it to be the source of her consolation and strength.

"Yes, the view is charming, and it is a great pleasure to be able to see it, but it is not of it I spoke. This same chamber which I now occupy, was the cell of St. Francis de Xavier. It gives me many recollections."

"You have then some consolations," I said, looking out at the beautiful prospect of nature, with the busy city and the winding Seine at one side.

"Ah!" cried the little Irish Nun impulsively

breaking silence, "ah! if one had not consolations how could one support life."

"But you have the consolation of doing good, the true consolation of life; do not some of your unfortunate children give you that consolation by returning to lives of virtue or piety?"

"Yes, we have often that consolation," said the Superior. "But in such a work as ours there are many contradictions."

"I should think so. May I then ask you a question?"

She tightened her already firm mouth, and while an assenting bow said I certainly might ask a question, I knew that tightening said she would not answer it unless she chose.

"What is your motive in leading such a life?"

"The love of God," she promptly replied.

"And the hope of salvation," added the little nun eagerly, "to obtain salvation."

"Ah! there is just the objection I have so often heard in my country against such devotion as yours—that you do such good works thinking to obtain salvation."

"If we did not work for the love of God," said the Superior, "certainly we should not work at all; we could not have the courage to do so for our own sakes only. We work for the love of God now, and we know He will give us our recompense hereafter."

"Precisely so; that is what the Bible teaches us we ought to do and believe; but I know many who fear that those who lead such lives as you do, believe they shall get to Heaven by good works and not by faith in Christ."

The Superior regarded me with a rather perplexed countenance; she evidently did not comprehend my meaning; after a moment's reflection she answered thoughtfully:

"There are, I believe many strange opinions in the world of which we here know nothing; and there are, I suppose, heretics to be found, who set the sacrifice of our dear Lord aside, and do not think of doing their good works in Him, and in union with Him. Perhaps they think they can be saved without faith; of that,

however, we know nothing; since Christ is the beginning and ending of all to us."

"Yes," I said, "He works all our works in us."

"But we must try to secure our salvation," urged the poor little nun again.

She came close to me, and lifted her large, soft blue eyes, swimming in tears, to my face. It did not occur to me till afterwards that her anxiety might be more directed to me than to herself. Poor thing! I could not help fearing she might have mistaken her vocation, perhaps have entered on it in a time of excitement or outward trial; she appeared to be made up of smiles and tears, and all home affections. She did not like her superior to hear her while she advised me to go to Ireland and visit the convents there; secretly implying that there were none such to be found in France, in England, or any other part of the world; the suffusion of her plump cheeks, the deepening hue of her gentle, affectionate eyes, telling more of love to

her poor native land than her restrained words made apparent.

I looked at her face, mentally applying the poet's description of that land to the face that seemed ill adapted to the black veil and thick white-flannel robe of the cloistered nun.

> "Erin the smile and the tear in thine eye,
> Beam like the rainbow that hangs in thy sky."

But though the lot seems cast at random into the lap, we know the disposal thereof is from the Lord. It could not be by "mere chance" that this good little Irishwoman found her lot cast within the cloister of an immense foreign community.

At another time we found in the desk of a class room one of that community who was a striking contrast in externals to "the little mother," who was so great a favourite with her poor children. She was one of quite a noble presence; a tall, elegant figure, fine features and complexion, and bright dark eyes. Her smile was expressive of perfect contentment, her

manner of entire self possession. But her appearance excited no stir as she passed the dark masses of the unhappy ones; her smile called forth no irrepressible buzz of affection from them. The stately, beautiful nun might come and go, and no breeze-like thrill run through that mass, shewing how human hearts quivered at the touch of love. Such is nature: the same within a convent grille as in the world beyond it. The sympathies of mind, like the laws of chemical affinity, are uniform.—Talents attract admiration, the offering of the understanding; the qualities of the heart attract affection, the offering of the heart.

The tall, handsome, dignified nun would attract admiration; but the poor young penitents gave to "the little mother," whom stranger eyes would overlook, the offering of affection. I was ready to impute this chiefly to the well-known characteristics of her own unhappy land; but how surprised I felt when the handsome nun spoke! I exclaimed in a tone that shewed my surprise:

"How! you too are Irish!"

"How do you know that?" she asked, with the simplicity of persons whose accents are unconquerable.

"But surely you cannot perceive an accent when I speak French; and I have been here so long."

But as I had no other means for knowing, or even suspecting that she was not French, she was obliged to believe that I did perceive that insular accent so discernible even beneath its foreign garb.

Coming from the kitchen, where I had been seeing a white-robed nun dishing up a dinner, and totally unconcerned at my observation, I encountered one who has left a deep impression on my mind. She was eighty-seven years of age; her head, like that of the old, also white-robed monk I had seen at the Grande Chartreuse, was laid on one shoulder. They would have made a charming pair, only that the monk was short, the old nun was very tall.

"It is nearly seventy years since she made

her profession," said the superior. "She can fulfil her religious duties as well as any of us. It is all she does now. She has worked long enough."

Seventy years a nun! And was that a forced, a reluctant seclusion? Had the door never opened to her since her eighteenth year until now, when, in her eighty-eighth, it must soon open to admit her to the burial ground?

Yes, the doors, the cloister, the very walls had opened; been opened to her, to all her community. The house in which she lived and worked was leveled to the ground by the revolutionists; her community driven out like autumn leaves tossed by the storm; she had been violently thrown back into the world she had voluntarily left. In it she had remained a nun without a cloister; in the world, but not of the world; exposed to the horrible dangers of France at that epoch; tossed to and fro in the storm, her heart remained cloistered still, and when that storm blew over, she went back to the convent as naturally as the child you drive from its

home runs back on the first occasion for doing so.

She had entered the cloister in the first bud of her youth: had been driven from it in its opening bloom; had returned to it in the prime of womanhood; had lived within it to the tottering feebleness of a great old age, and after having devoted to it more years than is the allotted term of human life, she would close them within it, and lie down to rest in its peaceful ground till the grave should give up its dead.

There is something full of repose in the idea of this perpetuity. One contrasts it with the speech, I am sorry to say of a clergyman among ourselves, who was anxious to form a work of this kind in England, and in speaking of some peculiarities in a case that was mentioned to him, remarked,

"We might not be able to get rid of her again."

This is one of the blights that fall on our English works—there is no perpetuity either in work or workers.

Here, the word seen so often on the tombstones of Père la Chaise is the security of all who devote themselves to lives of charity or mercy—"in perpetuity."

The first historical mention that I can find of any work of this kind, dates from A.D. 1215—that is to say, the first Magdalen asylum: there was certainly comparatively little necessity for them; at the same time there were but few active religious orders before the stir of the Reformation called them into existence. After that time we find the religious women and the noble ladies of France devoting themselves especially to this work, while in "enlightened England" it was yet unthought of. It was the Reformation that shewed the comparatively practical inutility of the contemplative religious orders—so many of which only caused scandal by the corruptions into which they had fallen. In the earlier part of the 17th century; an extraordinary impulse was given to the active life of religion in France, and one of the most striking features of that quickened life was the zeal employed in

seeking such lost sheep of the christian fold as the Good Shepherd would have not only desired "to go and sin no more," but would have borne back from the wilderness with rejoicing.

Thus we find but few names among the women or heroines of charity of the 17th century in France, in whose annals we do not find some mention of their zeal in this respect. Of the young Princess Epinoy, aged about twenty-two, we read that she formed a society of wealthy young ladies, bound like herself to piety and the service of the poor. They met weekly, and consulted on charitable schemes; unhappy women being the chief objects of their solicitude. They sought them out and placed them in secure asylums.

Madame Pallilion, who in point of time preceded the young princess, was still more remarkable. At a very early age—I think under twenty—she was left a beautiful widow with one daughter, for whose interests she continued to live, as is said, in the world, but resided at the

court of the Duchess of Orleans, with the coarse garment of the order of St. Dominic beneath her gay attire. Let her be honoured for so doing: many have reversed her fashion, putting the garb of devotedness outside.

For her daughter's sake she is said to have lived in the world, and having seen her grow up a model of christian piety, and happily married at an early age, she then gave herself up unrestrainedly to works of charity; really, like the Master she wished to serve, seeking and saving those that were lost. She is said to have braved danger, insult, and even received blows in these pious efforts.

One of her exploits appears romantic. Eight young women associated in a life of pleasure—falsely so called—were inaccessible to her. The scandal of their life was great, but she found it impossible to reach them: at last hearing that they wanted a servant, she presented herself attired as one, and they engaged the former lady of the court as their attendant: and having in

that humble character won their respect and affection, she confessed who she was, and declared her motive.

They heard her with astonishment: beheld her tears for their sinfulness with emotion; listened to her prayers and entreaties; and finally she had the joy of seeing their repentance and sincere conversion: they forsook their evil life, and were placed by her in a respectable position.

Her daughter's husband contributed of his wealth to her good works, and by his benevolence she was enabled to found a secular community called La Seminaire de la Providence; its community were named the daughters of Providence; and from this house proceeded that one of which the illustrious Turenne was a patron—the same as the Magdalen—where poor unfortunates found a secure asylum and a calm retreat for life.

Among the many rich, noble, and beautiful ladies of France whose zeal was directed to the reclamation and relief of their own sex, the most remarkable was that young and lovely

widow of sixteen, Madame de Miramion, whose name is known in other annals than those of charity or mercy, since the cousin of the celebrated Madame de Sevigné forcibly carried her off in hope of making himself her second husband. She, too, after having married her only child, devoted her life to labours of love.

It is, indeed, curious to trace the course of Home missionary work in France which immediately followed the era of the Reformation. It seems that that event produced on the religious and moral atmosphere the effect that storms do on the clouded and foggy atmosphere of nature. The necessity of active religious life was seen when the nearly stagnant state of the secluded contemplative life was exposed to the blast of that mighty storm. It was after that purifying storm that Vincent de Paul formed the world-known Sisters of Charity which perpetuate his name. Yet the Protestants of France tell me they had been before him in that work by one of their pastors instituting an order of Deaconesses, which incidental notices in the Epistles led him to believe

had existed in the first times of Christianity. But mere zeal will not keep such things alive if they depend on the zeal or the life of the persons who form them, and want the principles of internal action and self-government which perpetuate such works as those of Vincent de Paul; they are then liable to a succession of change varying with the characters, notions, or perhaps doctrines of those who govern them; and, wanting an inherent life, they live or languish with the external circumstances on which they depend, and finally come to die as the mortals who direct them do.

The Deaconesses of Robert Le Marc, a Protestant in the early times of the Reformation, ceased to exist; but have been of late years revived in a large and interesting institution in the outlets of Paris; and this Protestant sisterhood combines in its numerous, indeed rather multifarious objects, that peculiar work which the Sisters of Charity must keep away from; at least as a direct object, though indirectly they contribute to its results.

It is curious, as was already said, to see this revivifying of religious life, and it might be said the commencement of missionary life in catholic France, brought about by the Reformation.

Here, looking from the window of a cloistered convent, one is led to reflect how these Houses of Refuge for the lost were in a great degree the product of that revivifying storm.

A few days afterwards I lost my way in the streets, and, on enquiring for the place I wanted, was directed to a large, feudal-looking gateway, with a house over it, before which was a board with the very unfeudal-like inscription, 'An apartment to let.'

I rang the bell as I was told to do so, and a very stout cobbler in leather apron, and turned up sleeves, came to open the door.

"I thought this was a convent?"

He nodded only. I took it as an assent, and entered a large and formerly a very stately court-

yard. The cobbler preceded me, and re-entering his lodge beside the gate, sat down on his block and resumed his work. It was a bare little room, and he was—perhaps in his domestic life always—its only occupant. There was a stove in it, and being cold and wet I went up to it uninvited.

The cobbler went on with his own work as a mender of soles, and while he hammered away at one, my organ, of loquaciousness—if there is such a one in the phrenological vocabulary—would not suffer me to enjoy his stove in silence.

"I am going to the Convent."

"So it seems," and the hammer went on.

"Can I go in this way?"

"You can try," and a louder tap followed with a little more decision.

"Are you the porter?"

"So it seems," and he sewed quietly.

"Is it not inconvenient for nuns to have a man at the court gate?"

"If it were so she would not have one."

"And I see there are apartments to let up there. Are they for women?"

"For men also if they will."

"And who lets them?"

"She lets them, the house is hers."

"Who do you mean—the Superior?"

"That is understood."

And a blow from the hammer followed.

"But this is a House of Refuge?"

"So it appears."

"Many persons must then enter at this gate, and go out also?"

"So it appears."

"It may not be pleasant to them to be seen."

"One does not know them."

"But one must see them."

"One need not look."

"Do you see the nuns?"

"I see her when there are orders to be given."

"In her parlour?"

"No, in the court. She must come to the court when there is work going on."

This feminine pronoun embodied to him the

whole convent and its work, and it was clear that should the convent change its Superior one hundred times, the word would still to him represent the same person, and the same person represent to him the House.

I left the discreet cobbler to hammer away at the sole he was so complacently putting into a better condition, and crossing the wide open court, I gained admittance to the small vestibule where I could fancy some throbbing hearts had oft times awaited the sliding back of that screen to the grille which even one, comparatively uninterested in what is to follow, cannot hear without a sort of mysterious thrill being sent to that seat of worldly affection.

I looked up, and in large letters I read on the wall before me these four lines of solemn questioning:

Where am I going?
What am I doing?
Is God my friend?
Will Heaven receive me?

They were moments perhaps not mis-spent before the opening of that grille, since a stranger from a strange land carried these questions away, written, it is to be hoped, on her heart.

CHAPTER XV.

AND now away from Paris; from all its mysteries of life, its worldly strivings, its religious workings. I am in an old provincial town, one crumbled down to a some hundred houses, with ruined walls and old gates, and disused drawbridges.

An incident occurred on my road hither that might tend in some small degree to promote a charitable judgment of those books of fiction, in which events and their sequence are brought into conjunction in a manner that seems unlike the ordinary routine of life. The author's un-

skilful hand may, it is true, render the combination he invents too apparently artificial; but in real life the combinations of what we call accidents are quite as eventful as those that are wrought out by the imagination. I am not going to tell of any very remarkable incidents, only of one which led to some others in this old town; that one being in itself so thoroughly insignificant as the simple fact that I took charge of a very naughty and troublesome child, whom its sick mother could not manage, on our journey here, and having in some way mesmerised the tiresome thing to sleep, won the mother's gratitude to such a degree, that she most warmly entreated me to go and see her on the following day.

I had engaged to do so, and consequently the next evening walked out through the most ancient and curious part of the town; by ruined abbeys, over narrow drawbridges that now never were raised, under strong and gloomy gateways, across sluggish canals, and finally into an airy, thinly-populated suburb beyond the walls. A

quaint and scattered village, divided by a long and wide grassy walk, bordered with tall poplars, behind which rose a low, red-tiled roof, scarcely as high as some of the houses near to it, with a heavy, antique tower. I saw it was a church, and as it looked to be very old, I went over to it.

There was a small, bare, wooden door, which I felt sure, heavy as it was, would swing open at a touch. I touched it; it swung open, and I came against another, which another touch opened. And then that change in the mental sensations occurred which one experiences when a step—a single step—changes the character and nature of all that has been around you. I passed in one second from the village hum, the play and shouts of children, the quiet labour of busy life, into an old, old church, shrouded in twilight gloom at the part I entered, but lighted further on by the golden sunbeams that fell full on the heads of three children, a boy and two girls, who knelt silently there. Their fathers and their fathers' forefathers had probably done the

same. One generation had passed and another come, but that old church had the same silent worshippers kneeling or sitting there; without speech or language, without priest or preacher, looking up to their God.

Stealthily I had come in, stealthily I was going out, but a young woman, who had brought in her little three year old daughter to say her evening prayer with herself in the old village church, had made but short devotions, and joined me smiling as we went out, holding her child proudly to meet my commending glance.

"She has been a good child," I said.

"Ah! that may not always be so; but in the church—oh! yes, that is understood. One is always good in the church."

"It is an ancient one apparently?"

"Yes, very ancient. So ancient that no one can tell when it was not there. In point of fact, old father Gaspard, the shoemaker, who is more than eighty years of age, gives it as his belief that it was there before the Deluge. Our vicaire, Monsieur B., was building us a new one;

you may see it begun down there, but that does not go on so well now. There is my husband."

With a pleasant nod she caught up her little one, wished me her good evening and darted off after the young man we saw going in another direction.

I walked on a little distance: I was not assailed by clamourous beggars, as is generally the case in French villages when a stranger is perceived. I met few people, and just when I found that I had not a sufficient clue to make out the mother of the naughty child I wanted to visit, an old man with a crutch came up. He did not know the person I wanted, but with all the readiness to render a small service, which people who have nothing to do so often display, he joined my path and hobbled beside me, telling me of the various names and persons, each of which he supposed must be the one I was looking for, though all particulars of the description differed as much as possible.

"The people here do not appear to be poor,"

I remarked; "at least I have not seen any beggars."

"No, there are not any beggars, but there are poor. Those who have not enough—like me, for example—are received into that house yonder, which our vicaire, Monsieur B., established for honest and poor housekeepers."

He nodded to a large edifice, forming a square round a court at the end of a pleasant lane. It was a plain building, not at all in the style of our country prisons or workhouses.

"It is served by the Sisters," continued the old man, "and I have a pretty little chamber there. When my old wife lived we had two, for she was crippled by rheumatism, and required one to herself."

"And you lived together?"

"Certainly."

"But not children?"

"No, the children are out getting their living. The house is only for the old who have done their duty, and may, as we say, be in retreat; if there are no children that is all the same.

When an old couple can work no longer, their friends, or themselves if they are able, pay a little sum and get in there. Single folks can go in as well, but their quarters are different."

"Monsieur the Vicaire was building a new church also. He must have had money," I remarked, recollecting that Vicaire is the expressive name for what we term curate.

"He had no money but what God sent him," said my old companion, implying by the speech that he had no personal property to expend on good works.

The old man turned up the lane to go to his House of Charity, after giving me an invitation to go and see him there, and I went along the grassy, poplar-bordered walk still uncertain if my road were right or wrong.

I next encountered some children coming very demurely along, with a demeanour that said they were always very good at school. It struck me then that my late fellow traveller had said she lived near to a house of some Sisters, and I recollected that children and poor people can always

tell where the Sisters live, and their dwelling would be near the one I sought for.

While I was enquiring, the mother came up.

"Yes," she said quickly, without waiting to know precisely what I asked for, "yes, that is the school, that house within the court there; but there is nothing to see now, the hour is over. It is pretty to see it. It is an infant school, and they sing and do such pretty things. My little ones go there. It was our Vicaire made it for us; we should have had no school for the little ones, but for good Monsieur B."

"Why it is quite another man of Ross," I said aloud, but to myself, and of course in English.

What a change came over the good woman's face. She looked at me in pity and wonder, she saw I was a stranger, and as I spoke English, concluded I could not speak French, though I had indeed already done so in her hearing. This only made her desirous to help me; she had recourse to telegraphic signs with such rapidity of movement that I did not care to diminish her

activity by an explanation; but understanding, as I thought her signal, followed her to a house, which I expected would prove that of the person I wanted, as she had told me that she should send her naughty child to an infant school near to where she lived.

We entered an enclosure; my guide, who appeared to have the right of entrance, conducted me into a neatly-furnished parlour, and there pointing to a chair, touched her lips with a finger, while she lifted the other hand towards the ceiling. By these signs and still more by the expression of her face, I clearly understood that there was some one in the upper regions of the house, who could speak to a dumb person like myself.

She disappeared while still making them, and a little to my surprise an elderly lady in a nun-like costume, clad in a coarse cloth, or drugget robe of a brown colour, in a few minutes entered the parlour—there was no grille, for this was not a cloister—and kindly saluting me, said that the English sister, whom my good-natured guide

wished to get to speak to me, was absent, but she thought it possible she might understand me if I spoke to her.

Whereupon I spoke, and very simply told her what had occurred. She informed me that she was the Superior of the Sisters of Poor Clarice, and invited me to see their infant school; adding that the woman who conducted me, was mother to some of their children, and occasionally employed by her to go on errands, that she had been told by her that she had brought a stranger to the house who had lost her way, and could not speak French.

This Superior was an active, stout woman, of a pleasant countenance, yet their rules did not allow her community ever to eat meat. She, at least, did not appear to suffer by her regimen.

In the large, airy school room, well fitted up with all appliances, some children who had come from a distance, were eating the supper supplied to them by the Sisters.

When I admired the room, and commented on all the arrangements:

"Yes," said the Superior, "the system is good;

it was taken from England, the infant schools began there before they began with us. Our good vicaire perfectly understood how useful it was."

"It was your vicaire who had this school-house built?"

"Most certainly, the house too, and chapel. Will you see it?"

"He appears to have done many good works in his parish."

She sighed, and I saw she mentally uttered a little prayer. Then led the way to the chapel. It was simple; she placed a chair for me, and knelt herself on another.

My eyes rested on a stone slab let into the floor precisely before me; on it were the words simply inscribed without any kind of adornment:—

Here lies
M. Claude B——, Vicaire of this
Parish,
And Founder of this House.
Aged 35.
May he rest in Peace!

I stood looking down on it when the Superior rose, and I had followed her example.

"So the vicaire is there now," I murmured involuntarily.

"It is the tomb of our founder," she said, "it was Monsieur B——, who brought us here."

Here was the convent; the sisters at their work; the school-house, the children; the house of charity for the poor; the new church half built; the chapel, and the vicaire's humble tomb. Certainly his works remained after him and also followed him. His works remained, as permanent as aught on earth can be; their permanency was provided for though he was gone; and their memorial was with God.

The evening walk had been more interesting than I had meant to make it: but its actual, or primary object was unattained. I went back to the town without having paid my visit to the mother of the child who had unconsciously been the means of repaying me for the trouble I had in putting her to sleep.

I repassed the old church, after looking at the unfinished new one, the building of which, they told me, stood still for want of money, now that Monsieur B. was gone: I entered again, with a feeling of interest, the one wherein he had ministered during the brief course of his earthly work.

The golden sunbeams had long withdrawn; the rather long but narrow nave was in darkness: a faint, star-like glimmer at a distance led me on: a real star, as I proceeded, seemed to hang self-suspended in the gloom. It was the small lamp that hung before the altar. As I found its light increasing, the thought crossed me that this light, like that which of old burned in the temple of God, had been, with the faith it typified, put out, it might seem for ever, by the wrath of of man in the violence of revolutionary infidelity: peace restored it burned again as it had burned before: and so shall the faith of Christ, in England as in France, revive again and again when the enemy deems it extinguished for ever, because

His word is pledged that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

The children on whose heads the sunbeams fell, were now gone—they carried the sunbeams away in their young hearts. But as I came on in a line with the light of the lamp it fell full on a figure and a face, which are still present to my eyes. A young woman knelt on a chair: she did not appear to be praying; but rather to have just ceased to pray, and to be listening to the answer. Her hands laid one over the other, hung from the rail of the chair: her eyes looked straight on; an indescribable smile was diffused over her whole countenance, but did not disturb the lips that were partly open like those of one who listens.

It was just a living illustration of the words, "Ask and ye shall receive: seek and ye shall find: knock and the door shall be opened unto you."

Fancy might say it was a wife who had prayed for an erring husband, and believed she had

heard a whisper that told her he should be saved: —that it was a wronged, yet still loving heart that had pleaded for those who trespassed against it and obtained the pardon it sought for another, while laying its own roll of wrongs to be buried out of sight in the tomb of Christ.

In a few minutes I was again on the stir, the noise and jar of common life—This world and the world to come—mortal existence and the life of the soul—both brought before one by a single step; for that easily swinging door was as the partition between them.

So ended my walk for that evening; and such were its unpremeditated results. Diaries are generally tiresome things; yet if one wrote down the little, common-place incidents of many such walks, we might find them, at a future time, as interesting or profitable as I find now the memory of the one I have related.

The next day I set forth again to fulfil the rash promise I had made to go and see my fellow traveller. As she was only a lodger and her

name was not, perhaps, exactly pronounced by me, it was really difficult to find her. I had forgotten to ask the sisters of Poor Clarice if they knew her, and this, joined to a wish to see them again, made me resolve to go to their house and enquire.

On leaving the town, however, I turned aside to explore the ruins of a fine abbey—destroyed, I believe, at the great revolution, and the consequence of this turn was that I took a wrong one on leaving the ruins and went to a house which I was told was the convent I wanted, but which was not so. I only discovered my error when the woman who occupied the porter's lodge placed me before a grille. I turned to tell her there was no grille at the house of charity I wanted, but she had vanished, and the sharp sliding back of the screen made me turn again to apologize to the nun who, clothed in black, appeared at the grille.

She accepted my apology graciously, and was proceeding to tell me where I ought to have [illegible]hen her accent once more catching

my provoking ear, I again exclaimed, with a smile:

"You are English."

"Yes," she said frankly, "I lived in England till five years ago; then I came over here. I was converted, and made my profession nearly three years ago."

"May one ask what you were before your conversion?"

"A protestant."

"Of what is called the High Church, perhaps?"

"O, no! quite the reverse."

And she briefly gave me some particulars, that shewed she had no notion of any church until she got among Roman Catholics, who convinced her theirs was the only one.

"But why, may I ask, did you at once become a nun? Was it that you might devote your whole time to praying to God?"

"Ah," she answered, "I wish I had more time for that! In fact, I had more time for praying before I was a nun."

"What else can one have to do within a cloister?"

"O!" she said, with a little sigh, "there are so many stockings to be mended!"

I felt myself rather impertinently interrupting her vocation; and humiliated to feel it was one I had little disposition to I parted from her with a sensation of sincere admiration. To spend one's life in mending stockings within a cloister, requires a spirit of devoted submissiveness very little akin to the vagrant one that had attempted to hold a brief communion with it through the iron grille.

The brief interview, however, was useful to me in more ways than one. I learned from this English convert, who told me her brother was still "a minister" in England, that there was a convent in the neighbourhood of the same description as that I have before described in Paris. To this, as I had still my episcopal mission, I at once proceeded.

The Superior, after descending to the grille for a few minutes, invited me to the interior,

and conducted me up stairs. Approaching her large dark eyes to the grille before she did so, I heard her with much satisfaction desire the woman who, plainly habited in decent black, acted as the attendant, while she was all in white, to carry up a chauffrette. The day was very cold, and my feet were very wet, so that the prospect of putting them on a pan of hot coal was very agreeable. When we got to the apartment, the superior threw open the entire of the folding screen that usually divides her from visitors, and as we both took our seats the woman entered with the chauffrette, which the superior, instantly drawing beneath the flowing robe, placed her feet upon, saying with a look indicative of comfort:

"There! now we can converse at our ease."

I fear I felt guilty of coveting my neighbour's goods when I saw the chauffrette was not for my cold, damp feet; but I forgot that when, bending towards me with a wave of her hand, she said:

"Now I am ready to give you all the information you desire."

She was a noble-looking lady, middle aged, tall, with a yellow complexion, well cut features, immense, commanding black eyes, that seemed to see everything at once; and all this, with a white drugget robe and black veil, formed the very beau ideal of a superior.

I must pass over the first particulars we discussed; it would be as indiscreet to relate as it might be tiresome to read them. This lady had come from Algeria; her conversation to me was full of interest, especially when aided by the more powerfully speaking black eyes, and the picturesque effect of the costume; indeed, I know not how any one could be proof against all together. She told me of one poor thing who strove to be so, but succumbed. I will tell the story further on. For the present, imagine us either at the time when the chauffrette is popped under the world-renouncing feet, while my worldly ones are a little more chilled by disap-

pointment, or—as may be nearer the truth—at some subsequent time, thus engaged in very serious and, I think, profitable discourse.

"You have, then, a hundred and twenty unhappy wanderers taken from prison and sin, and placed under your care?"

"Yes, that is all we can take. We are very poor, and our community is very small. We are so poor we must often wait for our food till God sends it."

"You have no funds?"

"Funds? Ah! up there, yes; down here, no."

The motion of the hand, of course, was the explanatory note on the words.

"And you maintain one hundred and twenty poor creatures on chance?"

"Chance? Well, if you wish it—chance; we call it Faith; but it is only a manner of speaking; no matter," and her head explained that we possibly meant the same, though I said chance, and she said Faith.

The same occurred when we were speaking of the deaths of those who died with her.

"Ah! that is happiest," she said, "when we see our poor children die. Yes, I have seen the deaths of penitents which we, Religieuses, might envy. It is the truest consolation to us when our penitents die."

"And the wayward and world-broken heart finds rest," I involuntarily murmured.

"*We* would say, when the repentent heart finds mercy," she rejoined; "but it is only a manner of speaking, we mean the same thing; no matter."

"But you are able to restore some to society?"

"Sometimes; rarely here in France; but in Algeria we made many good and respectable marriages."

"How? Marriages?" I said, looking at the face and figure, which seemed adapted to any vocation rather than that of a match-maker. The sallow face, the large penetrating black eyes, the white drugget robe, the long black veil, the long round bars of the chilling grille, and she to tell me, so coolly, she had made many

good and respectable marriages! Ah! some of our good English folks would not credit it.

"You married them?" I said, stupefied.

"In Algeria; we were sought after there."

"By the natives?"

"The infidels!" she cried. "O! no; we would not give our poor children to the infidels."

"But if Frenchmen sought to you for wives in Algeria, why do they not do so here?"

"Because this is France, and that was Algeria."

While I reflected on the distinction that operated so decidedly in the choice of a wife, the superior continued to make the case clearer.

"It is plain that men must settle in Algeria for their affairs; then they must have a house; and a house implies a housekeeper—it is clear. Well, in that case they came to us, and if they wished to lead good, honest lives we provided for them. One day a sergeant came to me; he stood there before the grille.

"'Madame, I am to have my discharge,' he said.

"'Very well, Monsieur,' I replied.

"'I wish then to establish myself.'

"'That also is right,' I answered.

"'I want a housekeeper, and she shall be my wife.'

"'That, too, is as it should be.'

"The sergeant remained silent, so I risked a question:

"'Has Monsieur found a wife?'

"'Madame, I have seen her.'

"He was silent again; so I asked where?

"'Madame, in your court. I came up here yesterday with a message; she was crossing the court, and I said, in my own mind, naturally, there is my wife, if Madame the Superior consents.'

"'But how shall I know her?'

"'Madame may ask if any one saw me in the court yesterday,' he said; 'she was alone, and there will be no mistake.'

"So I found out the child, and the next day the sergeant came again.

"'Well, Monsieur, before asking our child if she will have you, it is necessary that we should know how you mean to establish yourself when you leave the army."

"'Madame, I mean to have a wine shop.'

"'Good morning, Monsieur; if we do not give our children to soldiers, certainly we do not send them to wine shops.'

"The sergeant was confounded; he would have spoken, but I closed the grille.

"A month afterwards some one desired to speak to me. I descended to the lower grille, where you were at first. There was the sergeant, not in regimentals, but respectably dressed.

"'Madame,' he said, 'I am no longer a soldier, and no longer think of establishing myself in a wine shop. I am a store-keeper; my wife will have her house quiet. I have a pretty income. Will you give me your child to be my wife?'

"I said, 'All this alters the case, but we must see what the child will say; we do not give our children away without their leave.'

"So one of our sisters went and spoke to her, and came to me saying the girl would not consent. She wished to remain where she was.

"But the serjeant said, 'Let her come here, and ask her in my presence: then I shall be content.'

"So she came and stood there before the grille; and first she said no, and then she said yes; and so finally we dressed her ourselves for church, and sent her out from our house to be married, and the marriage was a good one."

I related the story to the head of a much less severely cloistered convent, who with a sigh remarked:—

"Alas! what a sad vocation for a religieuse!"

It must indeed have been a strange spectacle to see these nuns dressing the poor girl they had sheltered, and who was of the earth, earthy, and sending her out of their strictly cloistered convent to be a bride, a wife, a mother.

I must only relate one other little episode, and that because something like a story hangs thereby.

"We have distinctions of character, of conduct, of moral guilt, and comparative innocency," said the superior, in answer to a question as to whether distinctions of wordly rank or position were allowed in her house. "These are all classed and divided one from the other: but as to distinctions of rank, no; we tried that once and it would not do. It is seldom ladies of the great would come to us—one did, however, at least she was brought."

"Pardon me," I interposed, "I thought in France the law forbid any one to be put into a convent against their will."

"Certainly it does; but she was brought by her husband. Ah! I will tell you about this."

And readjusting her position and her robe, she began the recital, which I here repeat literally.

"One day an old officer came to me—an old Algerian, grave and stern. He asked me would I receive a lady and allow her to be treated as a lady, he paying all expenses. He offered well, but I said I thought if the lady were indeed a penitent she could desire only to be treated as

her poor sisters were. On which he told me that she was his wife, and the only reason he desired that she should be treated as a lady was that she was his wife. Finally I yielded to his representations and agreed that she should live with us as a lady. He brought her in a carriage: she was twenty years of age, and—" the superior curiously moved her hand over her own face, expressing thus the beauty which she would not articulate in worldly phraseology. "Her husband might pass for her grandfather, also," she added. "Her astonishment was very great when she found where she was: she had not known that point: and when she knew it she at once enclosed herself in a silence the most complete. No one could make her speak a word. I gave her an apartment quite to herself; I appointed one of our best children to wait upon her, and a sister to watch over them both: but she treated our sisters with silent contempt, our poor children with looks of disdain and abhorrence. They said no one could do anything with her, nor for her; for her lips were closed. After

some time I appeared to her myself: her hauteur was perfect: she respected me no more than the rest. She would not speak a word. However I took my plan: I continued to see her; I had travelled, and I, too, had lived in the world in my youth; and so I spoke of the world, just as if I were in it. Her lips opened. She uttered an exclamation.

"'Now then,' I said, 'I see you can speak; the sisters feared you were dumb; be so good as to remember that we expect you to speak when we speak to you.'

"She closed her lips, and looked at me steadily. I looked at her," said the speaker, turning her eyes on me for a moment, and making me feel they would make me speak if she wanted me to do so, "and then we saw it was a question which should yield. It did not last long; her eyes dropped, and I said:

"'Go; be a good child; we treat you as a lady, but we expect obedience.'

"She had two rooms at the top of the house;

the outer one was locked at night, but the inner was not; the window was so very high from the ground that it was not barred. The next morning the inner door was found to be fastened; it was barricaded by all the furniture. We knocked and called in vain; they brought me, and I called too, but no reply. At last we sent one round to the window of the room, and there a strange sight presented itself. Our lady had made a rope of the bed curtains, and fastened it to the pole of the bed, and descended that great elevation!

"The rope was hanging there still, but our timid sisters would not believe she had descended. They said it was a trick to frighten us; she was certainly up there. We had the door broken open, and found she was gone. Then there was an express sent off to her husband. He came quite furious, and said, when he saw the height of the window, it was incredible; she could not have descended.

"A few days afterwards, and he said he had

found her; she had been picked up on the roadside with a sprained ancle, and left in a poor cottage some miles distant. He said:

"'Madame, you will receive her back?'

"'On two conditions; first, she must be willing to come; and next, you must give up her being treated as a lady.'

"He talked of money; but no, though we wanted money, I would not yield.

"'Well then,' said he, 'she *shall* come back either to you or me.'

"Which do you think she did? Why, some days afterwards, there was our young lady in a carriage at our door. She came in and stood before me.

"'You are come back,' I said: 'well, we will not turn you out, but now all distinctions must end, except the distinction between our good children and our bad ones. You have looked down on our poor erring children, who have had all the temptations of poverty, and were without the benefits of a careful education. We must act by you as you would have acted by them.

You are the worst among them; there is none who has left a prison to come here, who, in the sight of God, is not perhaps better than you.'

"She stood quite calm, her eyes cast down, and when I ceased, she answered:

"'I am the worst among them; there is none who is not better than I.'

"It was hard to know if this were real humility or covered disrespect.

"'Your own heart should tell you the truth of what I say,' I added.

"On this she raised both hands to cover her face; it was to hide her tears.

"'There now! Thank God you weep; your pride gives way. Yes, let your heart be softened —then, poor child, all may yet be well. May these few tears be the first fruits of repentance, and followed by many such!'

"At this moment a sister entered, bearing over her arm the poor dress the penitents wore. We expected rebellion, and believed we should have been obliged to use compulsion. No; she even assisted to disrobe herself of fine attire, as

if she took pleasure in putting them off. She shivered for an instant when the coarse garments touched her; but her face that was so pale grew calm and meek.

"What a change! She looked so strange in the poor common dress.

"'Now then,' I said, 'be humble, obedient, good; do not fear severity if you do not act so as to deserve it. You are but a child here; if you conduct yourself as a good one we shall love you.'

"When I spoke the last words she lifted up her eyes to mine, and never did I forget that look. I think the dress we put on her brought about the change we desired: it subdued that proud heart, that superb spirit was broken—"

"And she died," I interrupted.

"Not at all; she was converted. She became as humble and meek as she had been proud and haughty. She was thankful when we noticed or commended her; her humility was edifying to her companions, and she appeared to turn to devotion as her consolation: yet our confessor as-

sured me she humbled herself more for the sins of the heart than of the life.

"In short, after a year and six months she was so good that we began to think her husband should receive her again. We spoke of it to her, and she trembled, and implored me not to send her away. I then proposed that she should leave us and go to some of her own friends or relations.

"'While my husband lives,' she answered, 'I am sure he will willingly pay for me here, and while he lives I only desire to remain, if you will keep me.'"

"Have you her still?"

"No; not for five years. Her husband died; we only knew it when the money no longer came. When she learned that he lived no longer, she asked permission to write a letter; it was to tell where she was. Soon afterwards a carriage came to our gate. She left us; our poor children wept at her departure, and we, too, we felt a loss. A good present came to our House, and one also to our chapel; but we never

saw her again. Our confessor made a journey and was confident he had seen her; that she looked happy, and was not a widow. I don't know."

"Her deceased husband, I dare say, had been jealous and unrea—"

"That we do not know," said the superior.

And the bend of her head said what she would be far too polite to say in words:

"*Taisez vous.*"

And I stopped short.

FINIS.

T. C. Newby, Printer, 30, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square.

INCORRODIBLE COLOURED INKS.

AMETHYST INK FOR LADIES,

In the NINEVEH Vase.

PRICE SIXPENCE AND ONE SHILLING EACH.

"This Ink is far superior to any hitherto offered to the public, both as regards the beauty of its colour, its non-corrosive qualities, and the freedom with which it flows from the pen. We have no hesitation in predicting that it will be generally used by the Ladies of England. By the Ancients the *Amethyst* was universally considered the colour that gained them favor, that banished sorrow, and averted ill thoughts! Will not these virtues insure its being used by the Gentlemen also?"—*Globe.*

BRILLIANT RED INK.

The only known Red Ink which is not affected by steel pens.

In Bottles Sixpence and One Shilling each.

MANUFACTURED BY

BIDDULPH & CO.,

McLean's Buildings, New Street Square, Shoe Lane, London.

AND SOLD BY THE SOLE AGENTS,

Messrs. WILLIAMS, COOPERS, & Co., Wholesale Stationers, West Smithfield, London.

AND BY ALL STATIONERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN INK.

One of the most important discoveries of modern time has been made by

MESSRS. BIDDULPH & CO.

In the manufacture of a "Black Writing Ink" which *will not corrode steel or other pens.* Hitherto all attempts have failed to effect this great desideratum. Besides the advantages offered in its non-corrosive qualities, it is highly valuable in another and most important respect—the permanency of its colour—which like the indigo ink of China, it will retain for any length of time, and will stand the most severe chemical tests better than all inks now in use; consequently, it will be invaluable where length of time for preserving documents is required. All other inks owe their blackness to the antagonistic principles of iron and gall, but while the contest for a period renews, it ultimately destroys both ingredients, leaving the liquid colourless. This

'GRAPHIC INK'

Formed by the union of homogeneous ingredients, incurs no such risk. It is the only known Black Ink which does not corrode steel pens, or get thick in the bottle. It flows from the pen with greater facility than the ordinary inks, dries almost immediately, writes black on the instant, and never changes its colour.

BIDDULPH & Co., Ink Merchants, Mc Lean's Buildings, New Street Square, Shoe Lane, London.

Sole Agents: Messrs. WILLIAMS, COOPERS, & Co., Wholesale Stationers, West Smithfield London.

Sold by all Stationers in Bottles larger than the usual size at 1d., 2d., 3d., 6d., 9d., 1s., 2s., 4s., 6s., each.

*** This Ink is especially adapted for exportation as it is not affected by climate.